



EQUITOUR

The world through the horses' ears

Riding Holidays through:

South Africa

Portugal

Bulgaria

Djerba- Tunisia

South Africa
Special





A horse is your mirror. It never flatters you. It reflects your temperament. It also reflects your mood swings. Never get angry with your horse; you might as well get angry with your reflection.

Rudolf C. Binding





The whole world on horseback

Dear riders,

In this issue, we focus on an extremely diverse country that is a dream destination for many travellers: South Africa evokes images of sun, adventure, wildlife, beaches, bushland and enjoyment. The EQUITOUR offers are as diverse as the country itself, and we present some of them here. North Africa is also worth a visit: with Tunisia, we present another beach paradise. Portugal is also famous for its beaches, but has much more to offer. That's why we're presenting the country with a different focus this time: dressage and Portugal's national park in the north. There's also something for trail riders this time: with its rich nature and culture, as well as great accommodation and cuisine, Bulgaria offers ideal conditions for trails.

Enjoy browsing, dreaming and riding!

Your EQUITOUR team



Interview with Franziska Vaas

Part of the EQUITOUR team since October 2024

Franziska Vaas studied equine management and then spent two years working and travelling, mainly on horse farms. From South Africa to Chile to Finland, she got to know a wide variety of people and horses on her travels. She has been a product manager at EQUITOUR since October 2024, where she can put all her experience to good use.

Which of your previous travel destinations impressed you the most and why?

There are many countries that I liked and that left a lasting impression on me. But if I had to choose, I would pick Chile, for a variety of reasons. Chile combines all of the world's climate zones in a country that stretches from desert to subtropics, from the high mountains of the Andes to the arctic fjords in the south.

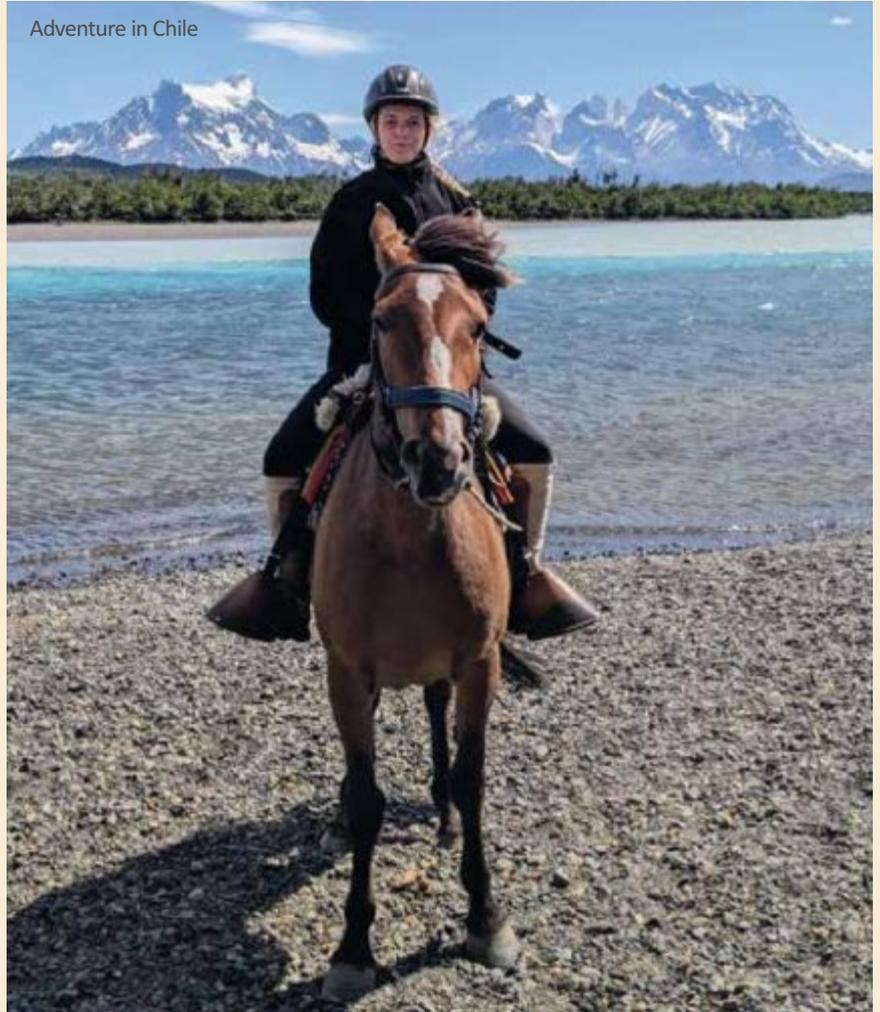
You can experience extreme heat and cold, sometimes on the same day. It is a land of extremes with, fortunately, still much untouched wilderness. Flora and fauna are rich in species. But the hospitable and warm-hearted people, the delicious cuisine and the moving history of the indigenous people also make the country unique. Horse riding culture is firmly rooted in the population here; horses are everywhere, especially in Patagonia. I can recommend travelling through Chile on horseback to anyone with a thirst for adventure.

What is so special about discovering a country on horseback?

Horses connect all the different riding cultures and equestrian sports. A passion for horses opens doors. It gives you a deep insight into different cultures. You don't necessarily have to speak the same language; you can still understand each other. In addition to the cultural aspect, a riding holiday is a very sustainable way to observe nature. Without noise and haste, you can cover vast distances and overcome natural obstacles where humans on foot or in cars would fail. You leave hardly any traces behind, and wild animals feel less disturbed. Travelling on horseback opened up a whole new world for me.

What can we learn from the customs and treatment of horses in other countries?

That sufficient exercise for horses is underestimated. Even during our studies, we analysed the lack of exercise for most horses in the German speaking region. A horse should cover at least thirty kilometres a day, which they hardly manage to do, even in open stables. On the farms where I worked during my working holiday, the horses were constantly moving in various ways during the day and some of them also had large paddocks at night. The general fitness and health of the trail riding horses – regardless of breed or country – was impressive. In my opinion, we can generally learn from other countries and cultures.



Do you still have a "to-do list", and where will your next horse riding trip take you?

Even though I've travelled a lot, my to-do list is long, and there are still many destinations around the world, including non-equestrian ones, that I would like to visit. One of my big equestrian dreams is to take part in trail rides and cattle drives in Canada and the USA. I haven't had the opportunity to immerse myself in the equestrian world of North America yet, but it's something that really interests me.

If you had your own horse, what would be your dream horse?

I like many breeds, but I am particularly fond of Iberian horses. Their people-oriented nature, their willingness to perform and their eagerness to walk convinced me in Spain and Portugal. Also, I am not very tall, so the standard size of Iberian horses is perfect for me.

Thank you very much, Franziska!



CONTENTS

- 8 **South Africa**
Where hearts beat faster
- 10 **Travel report South Africa**
Wild Coast Coastal Trail
- 14 **Land of confidence**
Info South Africa, EQUITOUR Programme
- 16 **Flora and Fauna**
The wild life of South Africa
- 17 **Enos Mafokate**
The Horse Whisperer of Soweto
- 18 **Travelogue South Africa**
Wine country at the Cape
- 20 **Walker Bay**
- 22 **The horses of South Africa**
- 24 **Travel report South Africa**
Horseback safari for connoisseurs

28 **Once around South Africa**

30 **A shared love of horses**





32 **Portugal**
Dream holiday on dream horses

34 **Travel report Alcainça**
High-level dressage

36 **The art of riding in Portugal**
Interview with Mario Cardoso

38 **Travel report: Northern Portugal**
Wild horse adventure trail

42 **Horse country with heart**
Info Portugal, EQUITOUR programme



44 **Bulgaria**
Under the spell of the Balkans

46 **Travel report Bulgaria**
Devetaki Plateau in gallop



50 **Treasure trove of the Balkans**
Info Bulgaria, EQUITOUR programme

53 **Apachi**
From semi-wild horse to tour companion

54 **Tunisia**
Djerba – Island of the Golden Sand

56 **Travel report Djerba**
Dunes, palm trees, galloping along the beach

60 **Under the southern sun**
Info Tunisia, EQUITOUR programme

62 **Holiday greetings from our guests**

63 **Book and calendar recommendations**

64 **Fun & Facts**
Interesting facts from the world of equestrianism to amaze and amuse you, EQUITOUR Web Info

66 **Imprint EQUITOUR Magazine**
Previous issues

67 **Preview of the next issue**





South Africa

Where hearts

Paradisical landscapes, white dream beaches, wild animals and cheerful people. This is the face of South Africa. Experiencing all this on horseback is unbeatable riding bliss.

beat higher



Wild Coast Coastal Trail

Beach, adventure, wildlife, comfort – Lara von Breidenbach wants to experience all facets of South Africa on her trip, and she wants to do it in the saddle. The right at home on the Wild Coast.



In the green hinterland



Fascinated by the surf



After a full day's bus journey from Durban to East London, I am warmly welcomed by Julie-Anne. In a moment in a jeep loaded with horse feed to her farm, about an hour from East London. From the very first second, I feel at ease in Julie-Anne's company, and after a stay in Johannesburg, it's like a breath of fresh air to get out into the great outdoors.

At the remote farm, we are greeted by lots of little dogs and four volunteers who are spending their working holidays there. I quickly feel at home.

The next morning, I take a look at the farm in daylight: nestled gently in the hills, it blends into the green surroundings. Around 30 of Julie-Anne's horses are on the farm, along with cattle grazing in the farm's meadows. The stable is directly adjacent to the paddocks. On this sunny morning, I ride into the surrounding area with Nicky, our riding guide. We pass herds of cattle, see large spider webs and cross the green hills that surround the

Lodge surrounded. I am thrilled with my horse and the McClellan saddles and enjoy galloping across meadows and through the bushes. In the meantime, the hostess prepares a hearty lunch for us, during which we meet Emma from France, the second rider on the Wild Coast tour. Full of anticipation, we head to Kei Mouth, where Julie-Anne's other horses live in paddocks overlooking the sea.

In addition to multi-day trails, these horses are also used for short beach rides. Back at the farm, our horses are already saddled up and ready for the tour. We ride towards the coast, pass through the tranquil village of Kei Mouth, and then cross the Kei River with the horses on a ferry. What an experience! Emma and I are certainly more excited than the horses, who have been passengers many times before and have even once they travelled as stowaways when they discovered a hole in the fence of their paddock in the middle of a tour and walked home on their own... In any case, it was an amusing sight: cars, people and horses together on a ferry.





Wind around the nose and nostrils

Now we leave civilisation behind us and set off on our first lively gallop along the beach in the afternoon sun. Fantastic! The horses, some of which are trained for long-distance riding, seem to be enjoying it just as much as we are. They are forward-going, well-trained, absolutely sure-footed and reliable. What is unusual are the cattle that can be found in many places on the beach, seeking the cooler air and fewer mosquitoes than in the hinterland. In the following days, we hardly meet a soul. Once we meet three boys loading wood onto a donkey cart and then a few lonely anglers.

In this sense, the Wild Coast is truly "wild", relatively undeveloped and pure nature. From time to time, we head inland: first, we cross a lush green landscape with palm trees and rich vegetation. The further we venture inland, the drier it becomes. We roam through small villages of colourfully painted round huts and experience the friendliness of the Xhosa, an indigenous Bantu people.

We cross rivers several times, which appear like blooming oases in the dry grasslands. The sight of large sand dunes makes us feel as if we have been transported to the desert, only the forest towering behind them limits this impression. We cross this forest, which looks like a primeval forest and reveals another facet of the Wild Coast to us. We ride undisturbed on sandy paths, meadow paths and several sections of beach.



Rock climber



Relaxation in the jacuzzi



Typical round hut



Local beach guests

All riding days follow a similar pattern: we set off at around 9 a.m. and ride for a good three hours, then take a long lunch break to relax and, refreshed, get back in the saddle in the late afternoon. The length of the ride depends on the destination. One morning, we set off very early because we want to cross a river that is only passable with horses in the morning due to the tides. As a reward for getting up early, a sumptuous breakfast picnic awaits us with a view of the sea. Our first accommodation is Trennery's Hotel, a hotel complex by the sea. The pool invites you to take a dip, and the buffet is so artfully arranged that you hardly dare take anything.

One afternoon, we treat our horses and ourselves to a break and relax at the Wavecrest Hotel, where we are staying for two nights. We take a boat trip through the mangroves, unwind by the pool and in the jacuzzis, pamper ourselves with massages and, after a sundowner and a hearty dinner, play a round of billiards. Finally, we retire to our cosy round huts with sea views. The accommodation is traditional on the outside and comfortably designed on the inside. From Wavecrest, you can also go for long walks on the beach and through the dunes, as well as canoeing. When it rains, there is a luxurious lounge with a fireplace and a TV room.

Our last accommodation is the Cook Inn Guest House. Tam, the owner, welcomes us with coffee and home-made cake. We are allowed to choose our rooms: there is the Guinea Fowl Room, an African round hut, an antique-style room, the Lavender Loft, and a "Flaw & Feather" room. Each of the rooms is furnished according to its respective theme. The main house has a unique flair. It is lovingly decorated with inherited items. The basic property, with its buildings and swimming pool, feels like an oasis of peace and relaxation. Tam treats us like royalty. She cooks herself, and her four-course meals are a symphony of flavours!

Nowhere else in South Africa have I eaten as well as at the Cook Inn. You can feel the attention to detail and that Tam is a hostess with heart and soul.

On the last day, we will be picked up by car from the Cook Inn and driven to the nearby Endalweni Game Reserve, where five more of Julie-Anne's horses are waiting for us. Here, an exciting ride awaits us, with sightings of wildebeests, curious giraffes, zebras, antelopes and other wild animals. This horseback safari completes our African experience.

By the way: non-riding partners can be transported to the various accommodations in the support vehicle during the tours. These offer plenty of leisure activities and are mostly located by the sea, so non-riders will never get bored.

In addition to the tours, Julie-Anne also offers working holidays. Volunteers live on the farm and help with the daily chores. I myself meet a volunteer who had booked two weeks and extended her stay to three months after just one week. Working with the horses, spending time with other volunteers and occasionally accompanying them on the trails doesn't feel like work at all.

My riding adventure on the Wild Coast was an unforgettable experience: I made some lovely friends, got to know many different aspects of the Wild Coast, relaxed in unique accommodation, enjoyed the seclusion from the rest of the world, indulged in culinary delights and rode some fantastic horses.

Lara von Breidenbach

www.equitour.com/wcs008.htm



South Africa

Land of optimism

Life pulsates at the southern tip of Africa. Despite its dark history, the country today sparkles with joy, hope and hospitality.

The Cape of Good Hope is the southern tip of the African continent. And hope is the feeling that sustains and drives the country forward. With its picture-perfect landscapes, picturesque dream beaches, modern cities and huge wildlife population, it is considered paradise itself by millions of visitors.

Nature lovers explore spectacular national parks and go on safaris to spot Africa's wildlife. Connoisseurs like to head for the wine region around Cape Town and sip the world-renowned first-class wines to accompany delicious Four or five-course menu. The entire coastal region is ideal for swimming, sunbathing, surfing, diving or even whale and dolphin watching. Sports enthusiasts and adventurers will find thrills throughout the country with river rafting, mountain climbing, bungee jumping and every other activity imaginable. And those interested in African history can get a picture of the cultural diversity in both the city and the countryside. Indigenous African ethnic groups such as the Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa, Khoisan, Sotho, Swazi and Venda share the country with the white descendants of the colonial rulers. South Africa is a

true melting pot of cultures with eleven official languages and numerous other regional languages. The sad era of apartheid has been overcome, but art, museums and memorials are full of cautionary reminders.

Tourism is the most beautiful bridge between cultures, and South Africans, whether black or white, understand this well. The country is known for its hospitality and its luxurious hotels, resorts and lodges. Even in the bush, comfortable camps, first-class service and the care of cheerful helpers await.

Horse riders are also enthusiastic about the diversity of the country. Experiencing this on horseback is the icing on the cake of their South African trip. PEGASUS offers thirteen riding programmes in different regions of South Africa, as well as a combination with neighbouring Botswana. Whether it's a riding tour, star rides or a leisurely holiday – one thing is guaranteed: the holiday will never be long enough. But even as you say goodbye, you can be confident that you will return to the land of hope.

Vineyards in the Cape region



Safari in Kruger National Park



Fur seals on Duiken Island



EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME



EQUITOUR offers its customers horse riding holidays in three attractive regions of South Africa: the inland highlands, the mountains and the coastal region. On horseback, you can immerse yourself in the scenic and cultural highlights of your preferred region. Whether on the coast or inland, you always have the opportunity to experience African wildlife on safaris.
www.equitour.com/suedafrika.htm

Country info South Africa



Size: 1.22 million km² Population: 62 million
Capitals: Pretoria, Cape Town, Bloemfontein
Language: English, Afrikaans, Bantu languages, Zulu, Xhosa, etc.
Religion: Majority Christian, also Muslim, Jewish and traditional African religions
Currency: Rand
Climate: Mediterranean climate in the south-west, temperate climate inland and subtropical climate in the north-east
Best time to visit: May to October

Formerly power station towers, now objects for graffiti and bungee jumping and landmarks of Johannesburg



The Witteberg Mountains in the northeast





Flora and fauna

The wild life of South Africa

Documentaries about Africa's wildlife are amazing, but they are nothing compared to experiencing it for yourself. Let's go on safari and see

The Big Five: elephant, rhino, lion, leopard and buffalo.



Less well known than the Big Five are the Little Five, whose names are reminiscent of the Big Five: the elephant shrew, the buffalo weaver, the leopard tortoise and the insects known as the lion ant and the rhinoceros beetle. And who can resist the charm of the clever meerkats or the cuddly rock hyraxes! You can experience both the big and small animals in no fewer than 24 national parks located in various regions of South Africa. The largest and best known is Kruger National Park. Covering around 20,000 square kilometres, it is roughly the size of Hesse. So you can and should plan to spend several days visiting it.

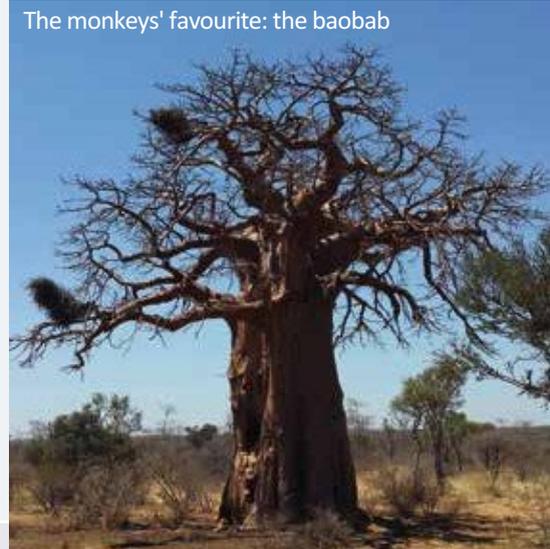
In addition to the national parks, there are a large number of private game farms offering good opportunities for wildlife viewing. The typical image of South Africa's wilderness also includes its characteristic flora, with over 20,000 plant species. These range from the fine-leaved fynbos in the west to tree savannah from acacia trees to tropical forests in the east. Typical plants include proteas, silver trees, heather, succulents and aloes. In the dry zones of the north, you will find the mighty baobab or monkey bread tree. It owes its name to the fact that many monkeys love its fruit.

Photos: Gabriele Kärcher, Pixabay/ Alexas, Fotos, Andreas Gollner, Brand: beautifully, Gerhard Romero, Jürgen Bieren, Kapab5, private

Elephant of the "Little Five": Springbok



monkey bread tree



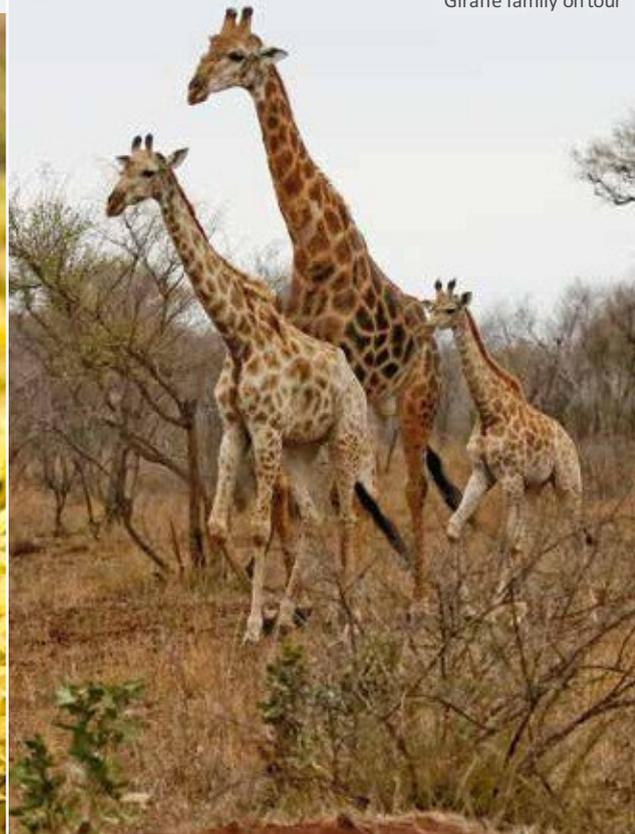
The monkeys' favourite: the baobab

Bright red fynbos. Fynbos translates as "fine bush"

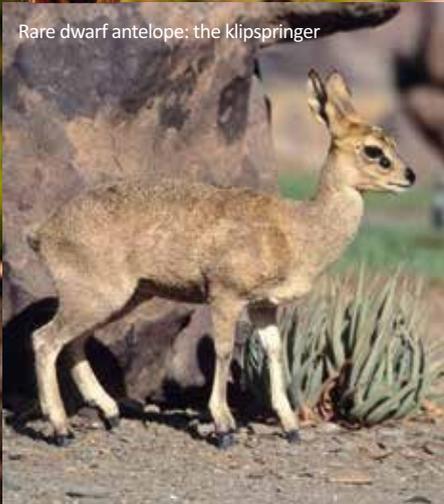


The cuddly rock hyrax, also known as the dassie

Giraffe family on tour



Rare dwarf antelope: the klipspringer



The buffalo weaver



Enos Mafokate

The horse whisperer of Soweto

Defying all apartheid laws, Enos Mafokate from Soweto has become a successful show jumper. Today, he gratefully passes on the opportunities he was given as a child to poor kids in Soweto.

As the child of a farmer in Johannesburg's poor neighbourhood of Alexandra, Enos gazed longingly across the river at the horses belonging to a white family. Despite being forbidden to do so, he befriended their son John and was allowed to ride his pony. From then on, his heart belonged to horses, and his talent in the saddle quickly became apparent when John taught Enos how to ride.

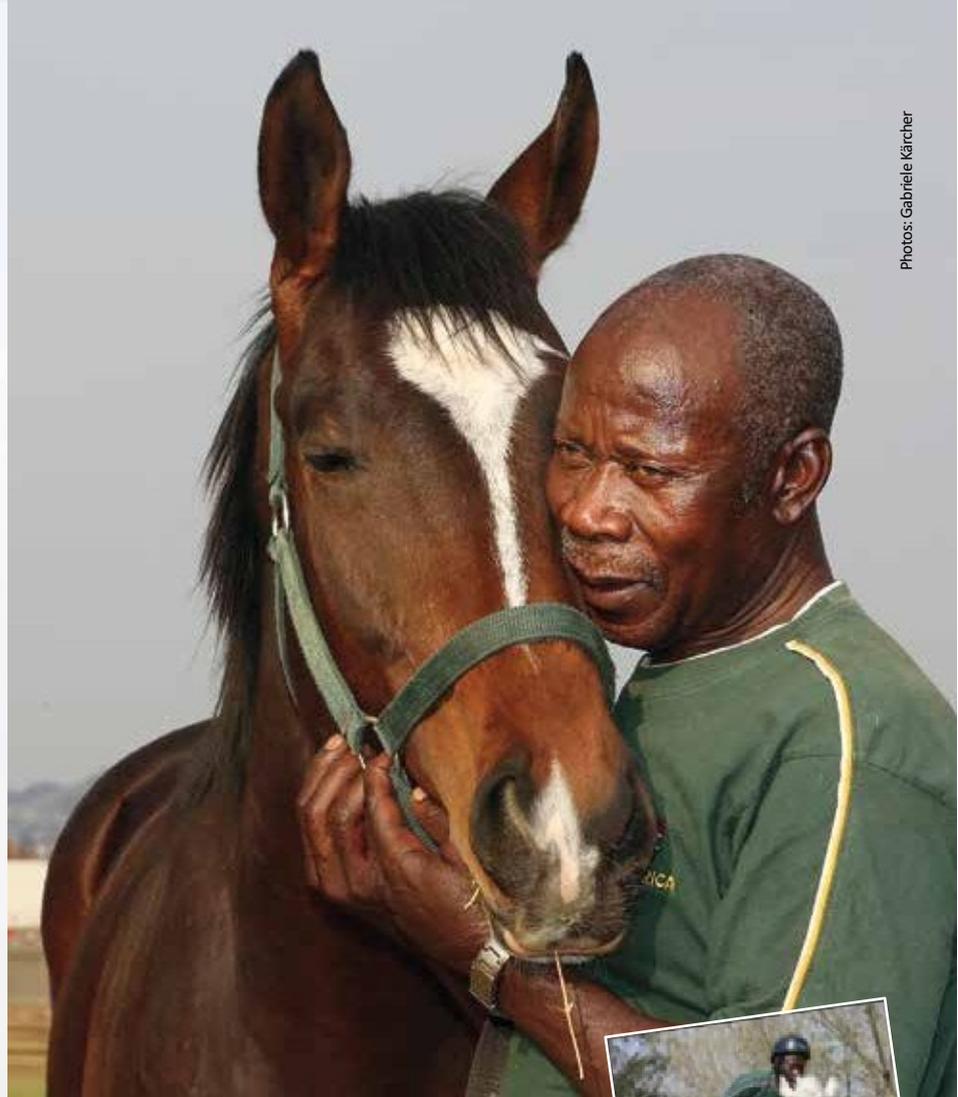
Thanks to his understanding of horses, he later found work as a groom on the tournament circuit. European show jumpers recognised his talent and encouraged him. With enormous willpower, through perseverance and exceptional talent, he achieved international fame as a black show jumper. He was only allowed to compete in his own country after apartheid was relaxed.

Today, he is the one who gives black children access to what is still an elite sport dominated by whites. With donations, he has built the Soweto Equestrian Centre, a large riding centre on a two-hectare site, where he teaches children and young people how to handle horses. His commitment also extends to neglected horses, which he rescues from misery or saves from the slaughterhouse. Many of his horses are former cart horses, some of which were donated to him because their previous owners were dissatisfied with them as sport or racehorses. With love, skill and patience, Enos has turned them all into contented, reliable riding horses. And in order to improve the fate of working horses, he also teaches their owners the basics of feeding, shoeing, correct driving and respectful handling of horses free of charge.

Enos' riding centre is a haven of hope. Children of all ages arrive in worn shirts and trousers, but with beaming faces as they swing themselves into the saddle. Enos teaches the children vaulting, riding and jumping, but above all, he gives their lives a meaningful direction.

He trains young people to become grooms or farriers. When they can, his protégés give him a few rand, but Enos is not about the money. Some of his riders and vaulters have made it. He has already made it into the South African national team. That is the best reward for Enos.

Gabriele Kärcher



Photos: Gabriele Kärcher



Still confident in the jumping saddle

Horse Girls in South Africa

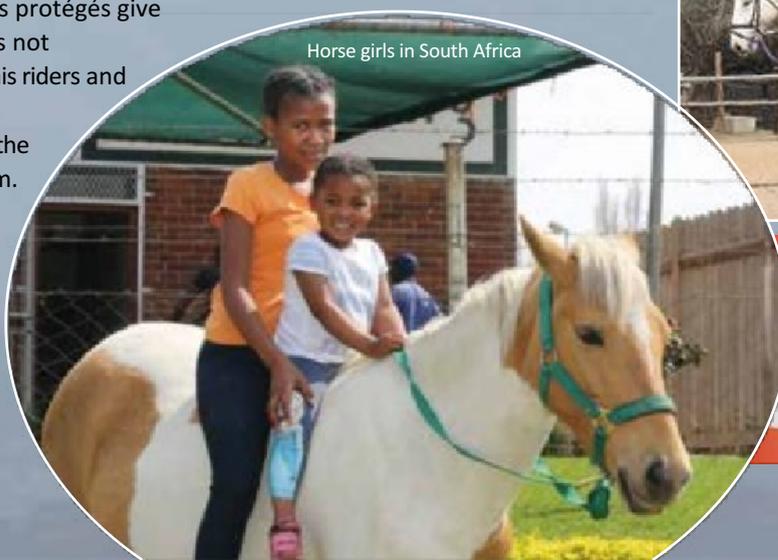


Happy Soweto Kids



Enos' vaulting team

17



Horse girls in South Africa



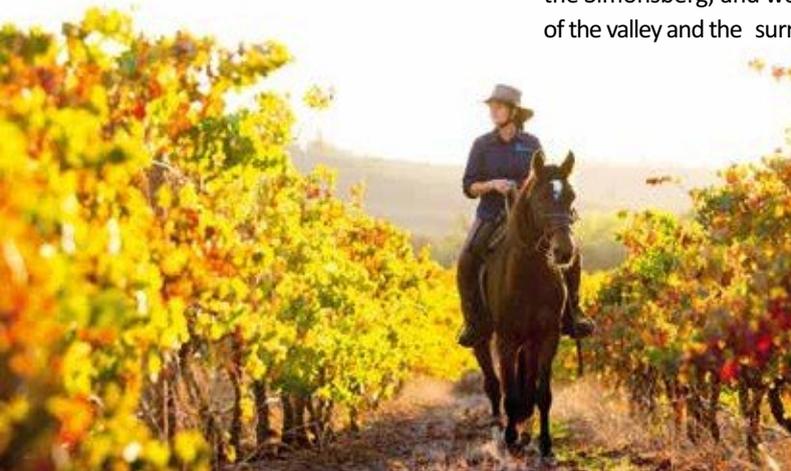
Wine country at the Cape



Julia Wies visits two riding stables in the Cape region. First, she visits Louis Geyer's estate, just 45 minutes from Cape Town Airport. Nestled among vineyards, forest, gardens and orchards, this region for connoisseurs shows itself from its most beautiful side.

1 The first part takes us past various fruit trees at all gaits, through small woods and finally through vineyards. Our horses eagerly climb up the Simonsberg, and we enjoy magnificent views of the valley and the surrounding mountains.

2 At midday, we reach the Bocksberg vineyard through the vine fields. The neatly laid out plant garden is reminiscent of pictures from "Home & Garden", and the scent is beguiling.



3 We are given a tour of the winery and marvel at the huge wine barrels (the smaller ones hold 300 litres!). Of course, we do a wine tasting, and everyone tries five wines of their choice.



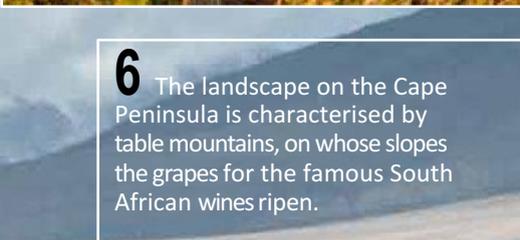
4 Louis Geyer, charming Host and riding guide



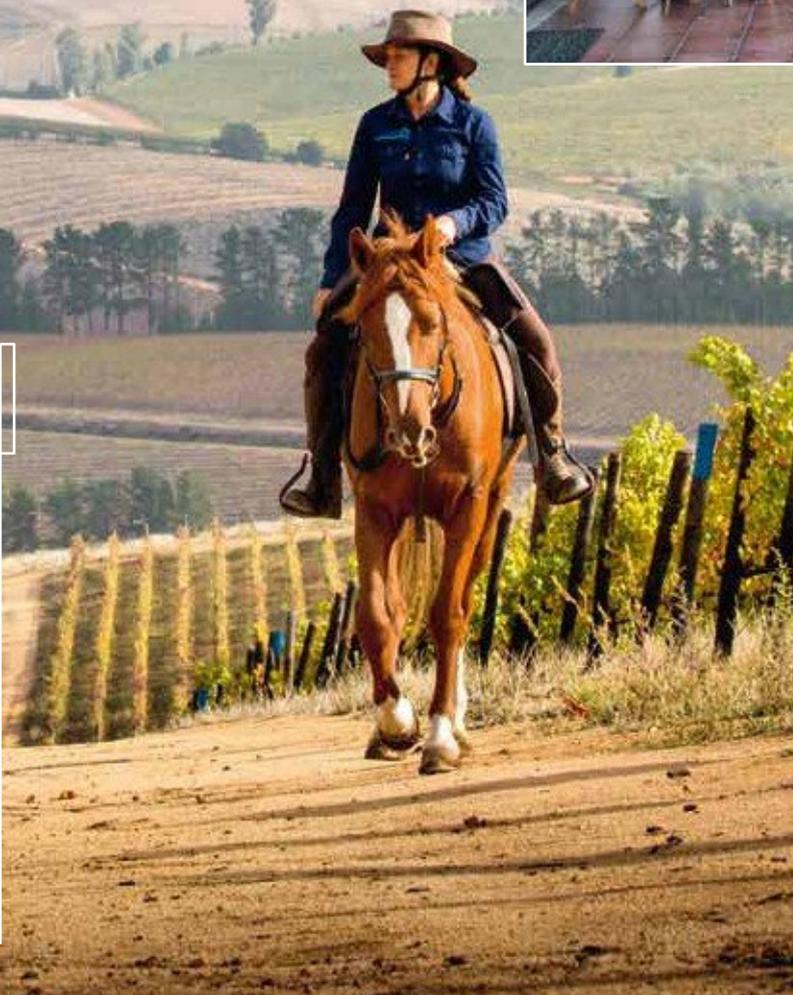
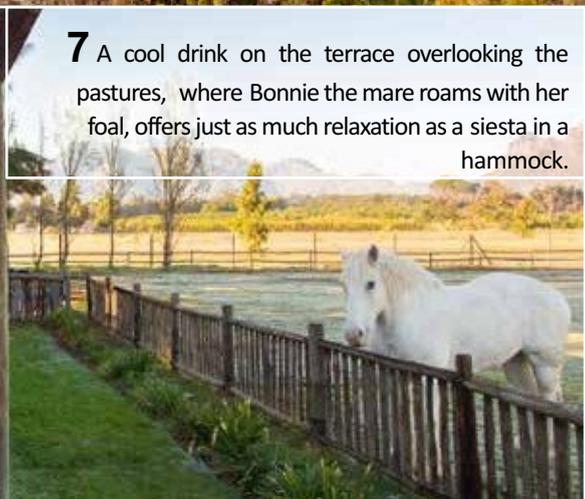
5 After a shorter ride, during which we we repeatedly encounter guinea fowls and bushbucks, we finally reach the stable. We say goodbye to the horses, which return to the pastures.



6 The landscape on the Cape Peninsula is characterised by table mountains, on whose slopes the grapes for the famous South African wines ripen.



7 A cool drink on the terrace overlooking the pastures, where Bonnie the mare roams with her foal, offers just as much relaxation as a siesta in a hammock.



8 In the evening, we drive to Frenchhoek for dinner. The food is delicious, ranging from fresh fish to Mediterranean pasta. The dessert is also excellent, a real treat!

Link to the programme: www.equitour.com/cwrsta.htm

We continue on to Howard at Walker Bay.

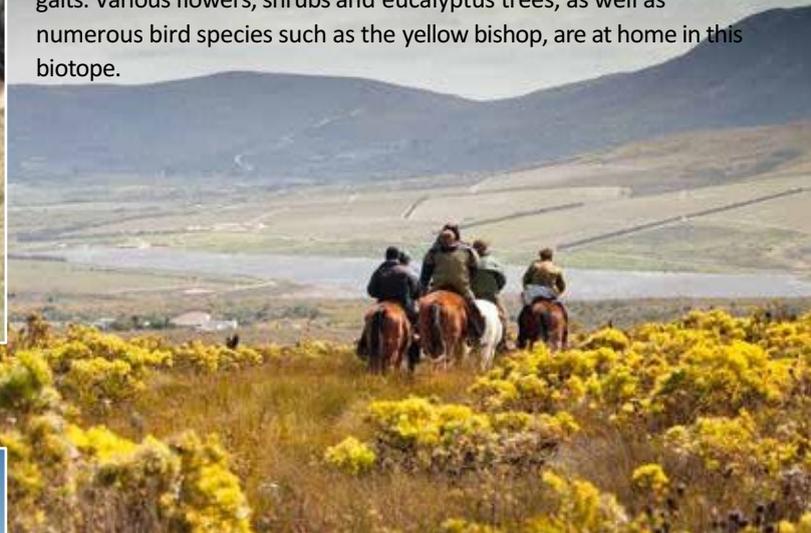
Walker Bay

Walker Bay is a natural paradise. EQUITOUR partner Howard offers fantastic rides along the coast to the Cape of Good Hope with his semi-wild herd of horses.



1 The horses grow up close to nature in the reserve before being trained as trail horses. They are sure-footed and unafraid of birds, noises or objects.

2 We mount our horses and set off through the fynbos landscape. We ride along narrow paths and trails, sometimes cross-country, at all gaits. Various flowers, shrubs and eucalyptus trees, as well as numerous bird species such as the yellow bishop, are at home in this biotope.



3 We ride uphill through bushes and forest. Then the landscape changes completely, and we reach a sea of sand dunes. Once we arrive at the beach, we can enjoy some great galloping!

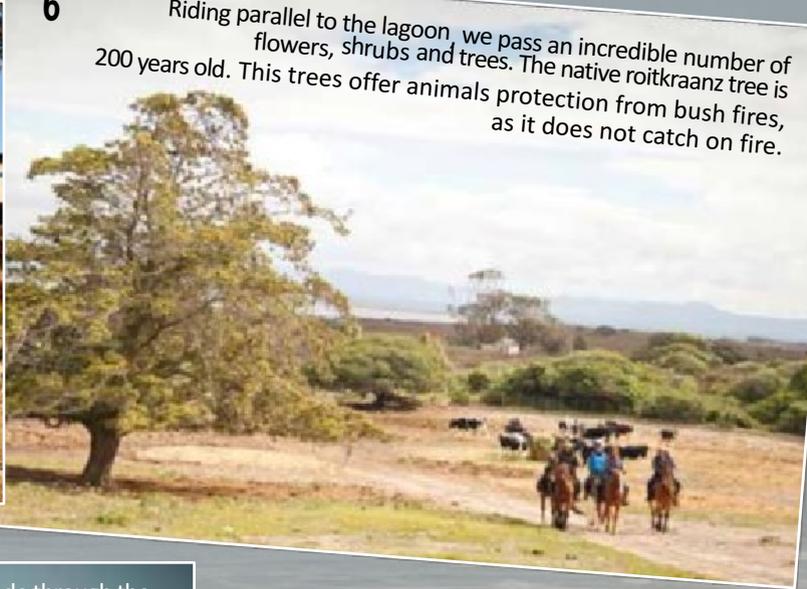
4 We are lucky and spot some fountains, fins and even a humpback whale jumping, an absolute highlight! We also spotted some from horseback, a magnificent Experience. Walker Bay is famous for its right whales. Many whale calves are born here and grow up before the herds migrate to deeper waters where there is more food.



5 We stay in this lodge for tonight and the next night lodge right by a lagoon. The room is large with a double bed, kitchenette, bathroom and a terrace overlooking the bird-rich lagoon.



6 Riding parallel to the lagoon, we pass an incredible number of flowers, shrubs and trees. The native roitkraanz tree is 200 years old. This trees offer animals protection from bush fires, as it does not catch on fire.



7 The horses eagerly climb the dunes to the lagoon. There they waded through the water and then onto the beach. And what could be better than galloping along a wide, deserted beach? I think the horses enjoyed it just as much as we did.



8 We follow the Fisher Trail along Walker Bay at a brisk trot. The sun is shining, the water is azure blue and the firm sandy ground invites us to gallop. Some Seals bask in the sun, and seagulls roam the beach. We enjoy one last gallop before heading over the dunes and rocks.



9 It's time to say goodbye! I am particularly impressed by the nature and whale watching on horseback. Thank you Howard, the tour was great. After the trail, the horses stay in the extensive nature reserve for a week or two to recover.



Photos: Julia Wies
Pixabay/suesun

A report by Julia Wies Info:
www.equitour.com/wal007.htm

The horses of South Africa

The southern tip of Africa was actually just a stopover for merchant ships travelling between Europe and Asia, but it was here that the history of South African horses began in 1652.



The Dutchman Jan van Riebeeck landed off Table Mountain in 1652 to claim the region for his country. In the same year, the first horses arrived in South Africa from Asia, more precisely from the island of Java. It is unclear whether they were Arab-Berber horses or descendants of Mongolian and Persian horses. In any case, they played a significant role in the settlement and development of the Cape region and later also in the expansion of Europeans towards the north and east. More horses were imported, including Andalusians and even Criollos from South America. The horses were called Kappferd or Boerperd (Dutch for farmer's horse). Both are now official breed names.

The breed continued to develop. When South Africa came under British control, English thoroughbreds were imported. British expertise in horse breeding had a positive effect on the Cape horse. Refined by the thoroughbred, it still combined the qualities of all the breeds whose blood flowed in its veins. It endured climatic extremes, was enduring and sufficient. In addition, it was strong, sure-footed and fast, and also had an extremely friendly, cooperative nature.

In the 19th century, other breeds were introduced. Friesians, Norfolk Trotters, Hackneys and Cleveland Bays were crossbred, primarily to improve the draught horse characteristics. The Norfolk Trotter contributed the genes for special gaits, and even today, Boerperds are comfortable and enduring distance and trail riding horses thanks to their tölt.

Boerperd breeding suffered three devastating setbacks. First, African horse plague wiped out a large part of the population, then came the Boer Wars and finally the First World War. Disagreements among breeders and within the breeding association threatened to cause the first high-quality type to disappear completely. It was not until 1957 that

the Boerperds Breeder's Society of South Africa, which sought to create a distinct South African riding horse modelled on the old Cape horse by crossbreeding certain breeds such as Arabian, Hackney, Thoroughbred and American Saddlebred.

Today's breeding goal is a comfortable, smooth-moving, stylish horse with good action, which should also be robust, enduring and harmoniously built. What began with the Norfolk Trotter was furthered by crossbreeding with the American Saddlebred: the talent for four- and five-gaits.

Boerperd profile

Size:	142 to 163 cm at the withers
Conformation:	Medium-sized, strong, elegant
Colour:	All basic colours, no grey
Character:	Persistent, undemanding, well-balanced
Characteristics	Hard-working, easy to ride, good gaits
Suitability	Endurance riding, leisure and trail riding



Kaapsehoop wild horse

Not all travellers to Africa are looking for lions or elephants. Near the famous Kruger Park, horse enthusiasts set out in search of the wild horses of Kaapsehoop. The town of the same name has a significant history as a gold mining town.

Settlement. Right here, on the northern edge of the Drakensberg Mountains, considerable quantities of the precious metal were discovered and mined. After the gold deposits had been exploited, the mountain air over Kaapsehoop became still again, but what remained were the horses of the fortune seekers. Between one and two hundred roam the meadows and forests of the Drakensberg Mountains, and some also stray into the remaining village of Kaapsehoop.

It is likely that it is not only the descendants of the gold prospectors' horses that have settled in the region, but also those of escaped or released farm horses. The region, which is rather inhospitable for humans, offers horses everything they need: nutritious mountain meadows, water and undisturbed wilderness.

The Kaapsehoop horses resemble Boerperds, but they certainly have the blood of different breeds running through their veins. Living in the wild gives horses a special resilience. The greatest danger to them today is traffic around Kaapsehoop, but also poachers. The Kaapsehoop Wildhorse Fund is committed to the protection and preservation of the horses. It considers the herds to be the new, living and breathing gold of Kaapsehoop.

Gabriele Kärcher



Vigilance



Ranger



Security

Horseback safari for connoisseurs

Angelika Kaiser sets off into the African bush on horseback and in a jeep to see as many wild animals as possible. The abundance of exciting encounters exceeds her wildest expectations.



On the safari!

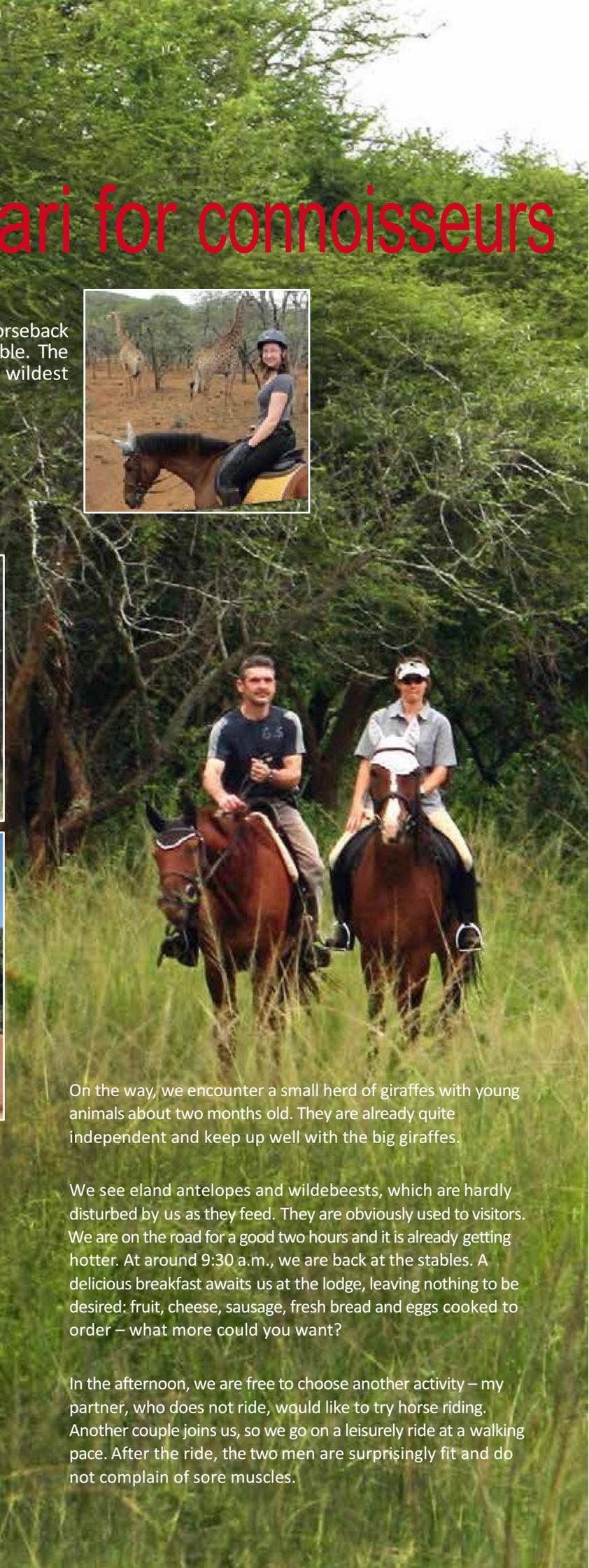


Luxury in the bush

We see our first wild animals during the five-and-a-half-hour drive from Johannesburg to our lodge in eastern South Africa. There we are greeted with a cool drink and enjoy the beautiful view of the surrounding hilly landscape.

After the long journey by plane and hire car, it's time to relax by the pool. The rooms are spacious and have a beautiful terrace. We are slowly getting hungry and looking forward to the four-course evening meal. We end the day with a glass of wine and finally fall into bed, happy and content.

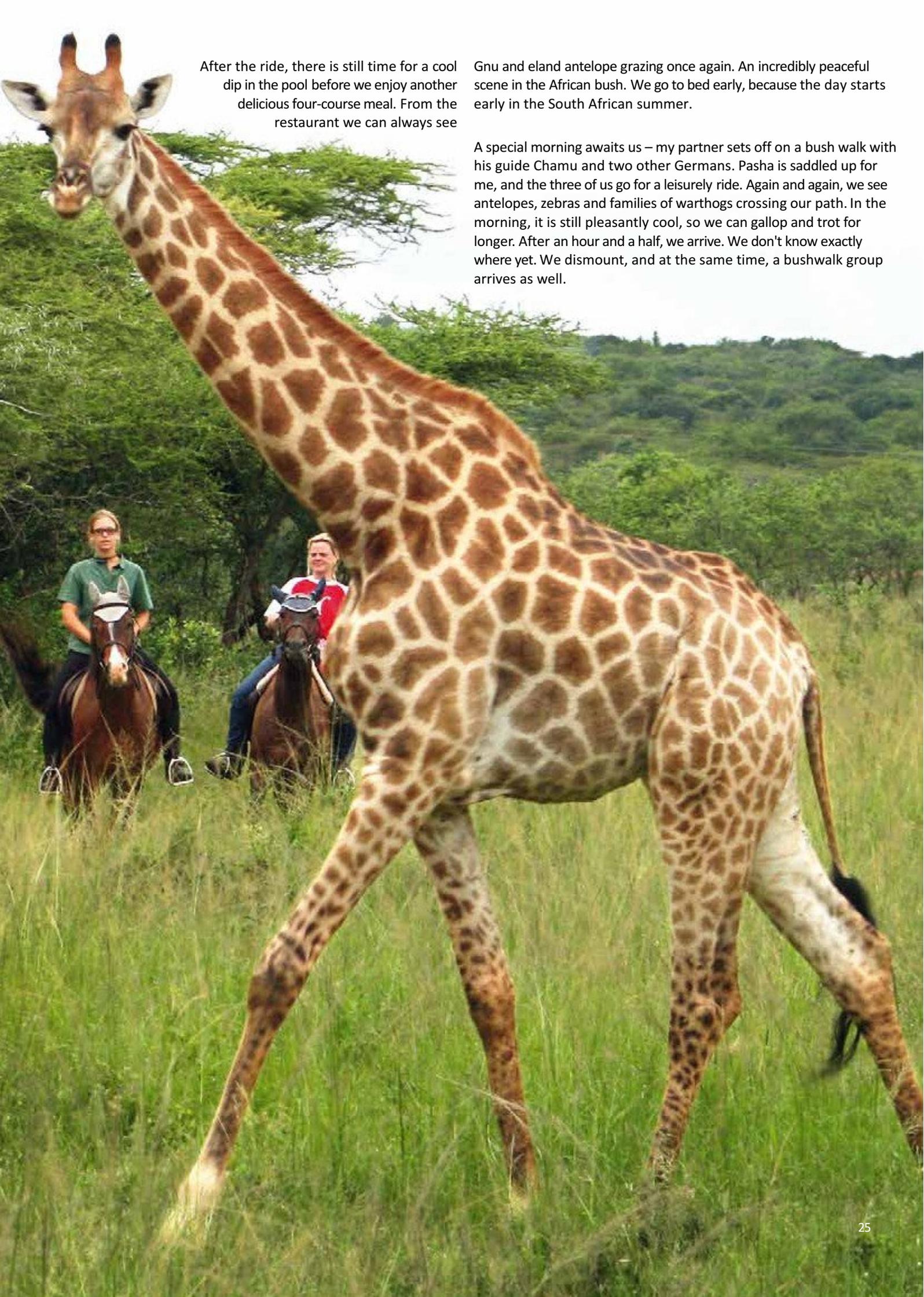
Due to the heat, we set off early the next morning on our first exploratory ride. My horse, Pasha, is well-balanced, easy to ride and happy to gallop.



On the way, we encounter a small herd of giraffes with young animals about two months old. They are already quite independent and keep up well with the big giraffes.

We see eland antelopes and wildebeests, which are hardly disturbed by us as they feed. They are obviously used to visitors. We are on the road for a good two hours and it is already getting hotter. At around 9:30 a.m., we are back at the stables. A delicious breakfast awaits us at the lodge, leaving nothing to be desired: fruit, cheese, sausage, fresh bread and eggs cooked to order – what more could you want?

In the afternoon, we are free to choose another activity – my partner, who does not ride, would like to try horse riding. Another couple joins us, so we go on a leisurely ride at a walking pace. After the ride, the two men are surprisingly fit and do not complain of sore muscles.



After the ride, there is still time for a cool dip in the pool before we enjoy another delicious four-course meal. From the restaurant we can always see

Gnu and eland antelope grazing once again. An incredibly peaceful scene in the African bush. We go to bed early, because the day starts early in the South African summer.

A special morning awaits us – my partner sets off on a bush walk with his guide Chamu and two other Germans. Pasha is saddled up for me, and the three of us go for a leisurely ride. Again and again, we see antelopes, zebras and families of warthogs crossing our path. In the morning, it is still pleasantly cool, so we can gallop and trot for longer. After an hour and a half, we arrive. We don't know exactly where yet. We dismount, and at the same time, a bushwalk group arrives as well.

Only now do we see what awaits us: a richly laid table with all kinds of delicacies in the middle of the bush. We enjoy our meal and the still pleasant temperatures.

After breakfast in the bush, we ride back to the stables and take a short siesta. We have one more wish: archery! This is one of the activities offered by the lodge. We receive a brief instruction, and everyone is allowed to try shooting an arrow at a target attached to a wall a few metres in front of us. At first, we are happy if we even come close to hitting the target. Afterwards, we always have to collect the arrows, and more than once we have to search a little longer because the arrows have flown in completely the wrong direction. After a few attempts, we figure out the tactics and even hit the bullseye. It's great fun, but eventually our arms get tired and we end our attempts.

In the afternoon, we plan to visit the Amakhosi Big Five Reserve. We have the opportunity to go on a game drive and set off with a group of English tourists. We are very lucky. During the three-hour jeep safari, we not only see giraffes, zebras and lots of antelopes, but also rhinos and a large herd of elephants drinking right next to us at a waterhole. The black rhinos are hiding, but we see a few white rhinos grazing and are able to get quite close to them.

The highlight of the afternoon is the cheetahs. With full bellies, they lie panting on the ground. Apparently, they have just eaten and are now resting, full and content. There are only two cheetahs in the entire reserve, so we are really lucky to see these fascinating animals. An eventful day comes to an end.



One of two cheetahs in the reserve

Early the next morning, we have to say goodbye to the lodge, our lovely hosts and the horses, as we continue on to Thanda Camp. The camp is impressive – a tented camp, but what a camp! Comfortable tents with everything you could wish for: a cosy large bed, a bathroom in a separate tent, an outdoor shower and a beautiful terrace where antelopes sometimes stray. There is also a large pool, a bar and a restaurant. And all this in the middle of the bush!

The safari sets off at five o'clock in the morning, and the rangers know what they are doing. They follow the tracks of Elephants, until we see them crossing the road right in front of us: a huge bull elephant and several calves walking past our jeep. They are not bothered by us. We continue our lion hunt. Suddenly, the jeep stops, reverses a little and our ranger points to the left: we all stare spellbound into the thicket and hold our breath. A leopard is crouching in the bush. This big cat is very rarely seen. Moments of amazement, then the leopard runs away.

The safari takes us from one highlight to the next. The rangers continue to search for lion tracks when suddenly, a few metres ahead of us, a lion jumps from a tree and lands right in front of us on the path. He was probably on the lookout for danger and is now trotting back to his pride. Seeing these majestic animals up close is a wonderful experience. On the way back, we encounter a huge herd of buffalo cooling off in the water. Back at camp, the next highlight awaits us: a delicious meal in the boma – a round open-air space, usually with a campfire in the middle. We sit comfortably at tables for two, which is very romantic.

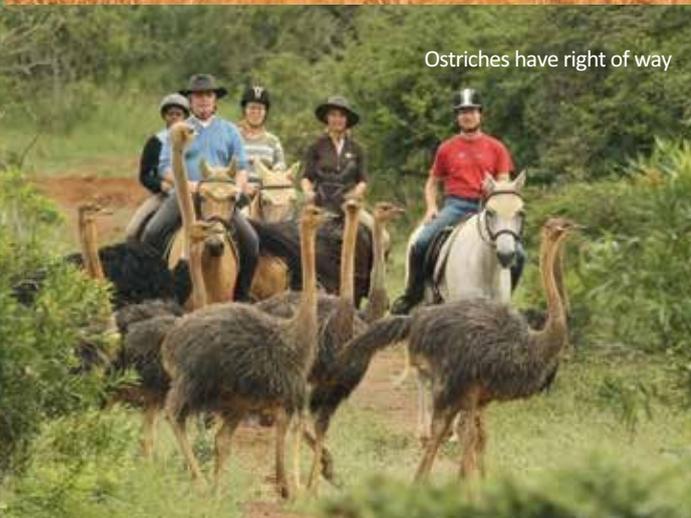
A group of traditionally dressed local women sing and dance for us. This is followed by a sumptuous buffet. An absolute treat for the taste buds. Another fulfilling day comes to an end.

Our conclusion of the stay: a great mix of beautiful horse rides, fantastic accommodation, warm hosts and first-class food.

Angelika Kaiser
www.equitour.com/pab008.htm

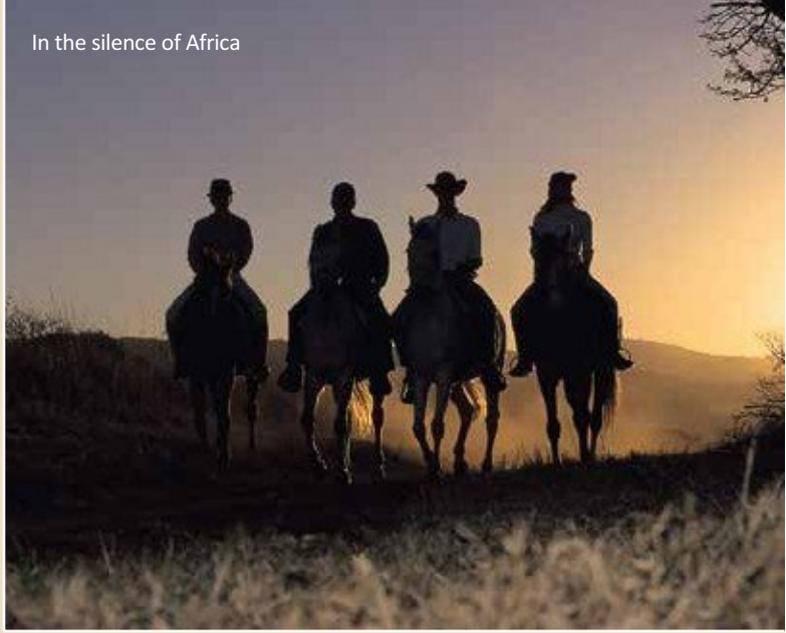


Lion family – a very rare, enchanting sight



Ostriches have right of way

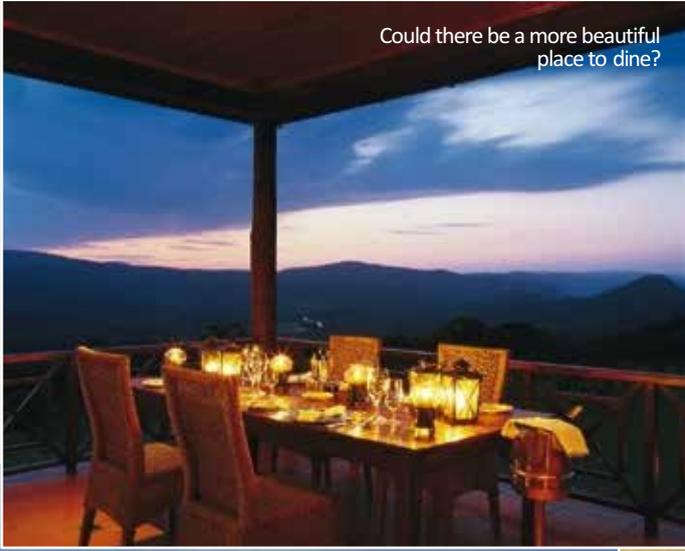
In the silence of Africa



Twice as delicious: breakfast in the bush



Could there be a more beautiful place to dine?



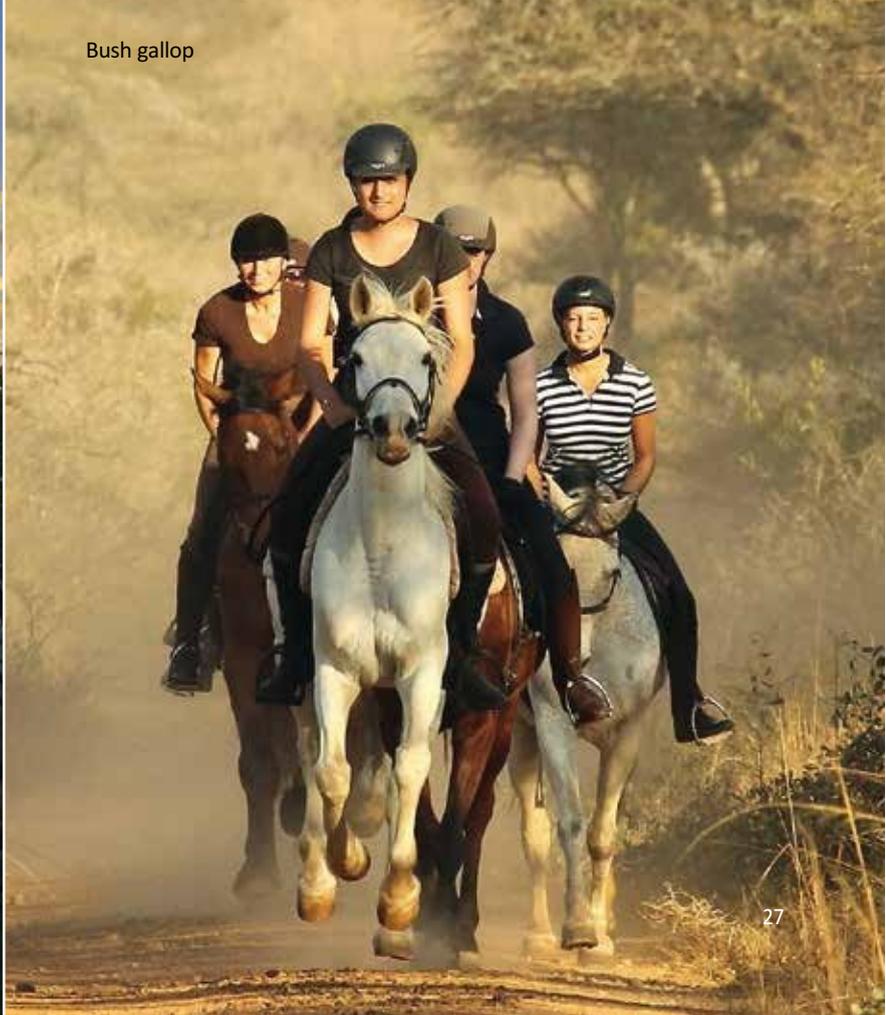
Better not disturb!



The obligatory sundowner



Bush gallop



Once around South Africa

There are experiences that change everything. Not suddenly, not dramatically, but quietly, deeply and permanently. Isabel and Lloyd Gillespie's journey on horseback is one such experience.



Over 7,400 kilometres, a year and seven months on the saddle, under the open sky, often at the limits of our strength, but always driven by a goal that is greater than ourselves. We want to raise awareness about African horse sickness, a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes that is often fatal to horses. Many farmers cannot afford the vaccination. We familiarise them with protective measures that do not involve vaccination, such as wind, stable hygiene and mosquito sprays.

Above all, we want to find out what happens when you commit yourself completely to a country, an idea, an adventure and each other. At that time, Lloyd is not yet my husband, but my boyfriend. Some people think we are crazy to embark on such a journey as a new couple. In a remote area, we once meet an old man who says to us with a broad grin: "A journey like this is probably the hardest test to find out whether you really belong together." He is absolutely right.

We start in Durban and ride north, along the border with Mozambique, then west, accompanied by the life-giving rivers Limpopo, Molopo and Orange – lines that separate not only arid landscapes and countries, but also habitats, stories and rhythms.

Along the west coast, the route takes us south through sand dunes and vast expanses to the foothills of Cape Town. Then we turn eastwards, along the Garden Route, the wild east coast, the Transkei and finally back to Durban.

Every single day is a decision. To keep going. To keep riding. Not because it's easy, but because it's the right thing to do. The heat burns, the wind blows, and sometimes the rain lashes down. The landscape changes from barren desert to steamy humidity. We sleep in tents, under trees, on old farms, in abandoned huts – and sometimes on the ground, with our backs leaning against a saddle.

Once, on one of those scorching hot days, an old pickup truck pulls up. A farmer hands us two ice-cold bottles of Coca-Cola through the window with a broad grin, just like that, without saying much. At that moment, the drink is the best we've ever had. Another time, I wake up in the middle of the night with my whole body itching. To my horror, my body is covered with black, crawling dots – over a hundred ticks! Lloyd doesn't have a single one. I burst into tears. Just want to give up, don't want to ride any further.

Contagious cheerfulness



Washing day in the bush



Only when all the ticks have been removed and the sun rises over the sea does my courage slowly return. It's one of those days when you rediscover yourself through disgust, pain and, in the end, perseverance. And then there's Fever, my horse. A sensitive animal with a heart that seems to beat for me. One day, a lorry races around a bend much too fast. In a split second, Fever jumps aside and saves all our lives. We dismount and I read in his eyes: "I've got you." Since then, I have known that trust is not a word, but a bond.

Our horses – ten in total – become part of us. Their patience, their instinct, their quiet endurance carry us in the truest sense of the word. There are nights when they break out and disappear into dangerous areas. And moments of exhaustion when they look at me that everything is alright. We learn to listen, not with our ears, but with our hearts.

We are deeply touched by strangers who welcome us, who provide us with a hot shower, or by families who share their meals with us. Children who run barefoot alongside our horses and laugh as if the world were all right. This warmth carries us through some cold spells, both internally and externally.

After our return, one thing is clear to us: we want to share this experience with others. Not as a big show or an organised adventure tour, but as an invitation to be authentic. Today, we offer hiking and adventure rides ourselves, not to guide people through the countryside, but to reconnect them with the horses, with themselves, and with the moment.

The most important thing for us is always the well-being of the horses. They are our partners. We pay attention to their needs, their pace, their feelings. Those who ride with us can look forward to adventure, but also to mindfulness. To what happens when you let go of control and allow yourself to trust. We don't ride to get somewhere. We ride to be on the move. And we want others to experience this feeling too: the rhythm of the saddle, the horse's breath, the wind in your face and the realisation that life is often clearest when nothing stands between you and the world.

Our journey took us not only through South Africa, but also to ourselves – and ultimately to each other. Because yes, the test was hard. But it showed us that we can bear whatever life throws at us. And that what is real remains.

Today, we live in Botswana, in the Tsewe Wildlife Reserve, surrounded by nature, animals and wilderness. Here, we continue our lives in tune with the rhythm of the horses and invite others to become part of it. With our Ubuntu Horse Trail, an eight-day riding adventure in the bush, we give people the opportunity to experience Africa from the saddle as closely and purely as possible. It's not just about riding. It's about listening. About marvelling. About communing with the horse, nature and other riders.

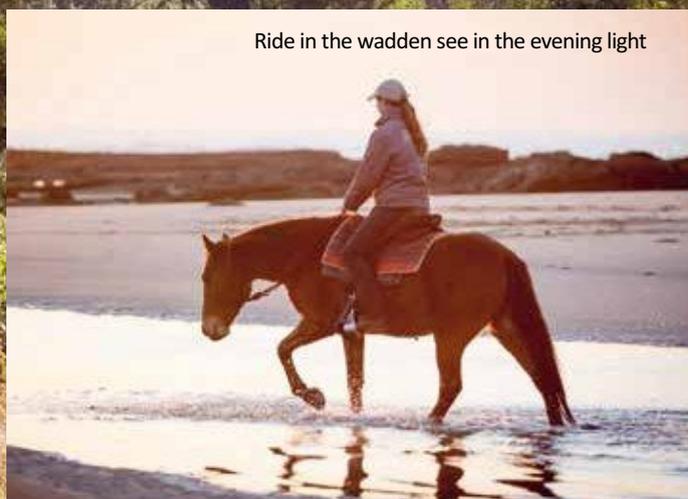
Ubuntu means: "I am because we are." And that is exactly what we live here. In every ride. In every encounter.

Isabel Wolf-Gillespie

Link to the Ubuntu Trail:
www.equitour.com/ubu009.htm



Encounter with buffalos



Ride in the wadden see in the evening light

BOOK TIP

Isabel Gillespie has written down the whole exciting and touching travel story in her book.

SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE SADDLE
 270 pages
 available on Amazon



A love of horses brings people together



We understand each other

"Friendly people" – alongside reliable horses, nature and culture, it is they who inspire EQUITOUR customers. EQUITOUR editor Gabriele Kärcher talks about her connections with horse lovers all over the world.

EQUITOUR customers can explore more than fifty countries on horseback. The horse belonging to the host becomes the guest's horse for a few days. The shared affection brings people together, whether in familiar countries or in distant, exotic cultures. Added to this is the joy that a friendly, respectful group of riders brings when encountering locals. Horses are able to break the ice and make friends.

I have had these enriching experiences on horseback riding tours in Spain, Ireland, France, Botswana, Morocco and the USA. My curiosity about horse people and riding cultures ultimately led me on a two-year expedition to important horse and riding countries on every continent.

In order to explore the mystery of the relationship between humans and horses, I try to adopt other perspectives instead of my own familiar ways of thinking. I immerse myself completely in the foreign culture, without prejudice, without judgement, without comparison. I believe this is the key to finding meaning and happiness in travel.

It is important to me to look at the big picture. I don't just look at riding styles, performances or competitions, but always at horse husbandry, which is the most important part of a horse's life.

Of course, the way horses are treated in many countries does not correspond to our understanding of species-appropriate or animal-friendly. But countries such as Mongolia, the American West and Argentina have so much land that the free, natural life of horses compensates for one or two rough edges.

In any case, I am careful not to accuse or proselytise. I am sure that because I treat people with an open mind, interest and respect, I have gained valuable friendships and insights around the world.

A travel destination becomes my second home: the US state of Montana with its big skies and endless prairies. I am very impressed by the relaxed style of riding and the natural relationship with horses. The horses live on hundreds of hectares of pasture like wild horses. This wild life does not make the horses wilder, but rather content and, under saddle, balanced and reliable. Of course, these horses receive less care.

"The vet only really comes for the cows," says ranch owner Larry. But living in the fresh air and freedom also makes the animals healthier and more robust. The ease with which the cowboys train and ride their horses is impressive and can be summed up simply in Larry's words: "A horse is a horse."

International understanding on horseback



Larry belongs to the Crow Indian tribe and, like his ancestors, has an intuitive understanding of horses. Fear of accidents, injuries, illnesses and the associated care or avoidance strategies is foreign to nature-loving peoples. Their trust in themselves and the horses is reflected in the horses' trust in humans. I picked up this fearless attitude there.

Countries such as India and Turkmenistan have a very unique relationship with horses. They are either regarded as lowly work animals or highly revered, even sacred status symbols. I found both countries to be very open and eager to learn about German riding and training methods. Ambitious horse owners bring European trainers into the country to further their education in equestrian sports. This also brings cultures together.

At Pushkar Mela, the Indian full moon festival, I see many riders who are not exactly riding in a horse-friendly manner as they race around the arena. Ute, the German riding guide for a tour group, does not lecture or reprimand – she rides with her guests through the arena with a smile and in exemplary style on contented, calm horses. Her motto is: "Make people curious instead of lecturing them." The Indians watch in admiration, and perhaps one or two of them are so impressed that they decide to improve their riding style on their own initiative. The change then comes of their own accord.

Turkmenistan's national holiday is also Horse Day. Everything revolves around the pride of the Turkmen people: the Akhal-Teke, the golden "heavenly horse". In this otherwise isolated country, the horse world comes together, from Canada to China, from Saudi Arabia to England. There is amazement,

boast, and deal. Presentations of art, culture, pomp and splendour give rise to friendships, trade relations and reciprocal invitations. Horses are sometimes better politicians.

Many countries have long been represented here by their horses: Argentina by the versatile Criollos, the USA by Quarter, Paint and Appaloosa horses, Spain and Portugal by their proud Baroque horses, and the Arab world by Oriental horses such as Berbers and Arabs. Friends of imported breeds eventually feel the desire to visit the homeland of their beloved animals. This allows them to learn not only about the respective horse breeding, but also about the culture and traditions of the people who created these breeds.

I was thrilled by the proverbial Arab hospitality in Morocco, as well as the traditional way of life of Mongolian nomads, indigenous peoples such as the Maori, Aborigines, Native Americans and the Basotho, to name but a few. Within Europe, the fascination is hardly any less. Iceland with its robust, lovable two- and four-legged creatures, the disciplined British with their wealth of different horse breeds, or the hot-blooded Spaniards – the diversity in the love of horses broadens the horizon.

Respect and genuine interest in horses open doors and hearts. People exchange experiences, stories and opinions. Customers of PEGASUS Reiterreisen can attest to this. The knowledge gained about horses, people and cultures goes far beyond holiday memories. A shared passion for horses creates a universal bond.



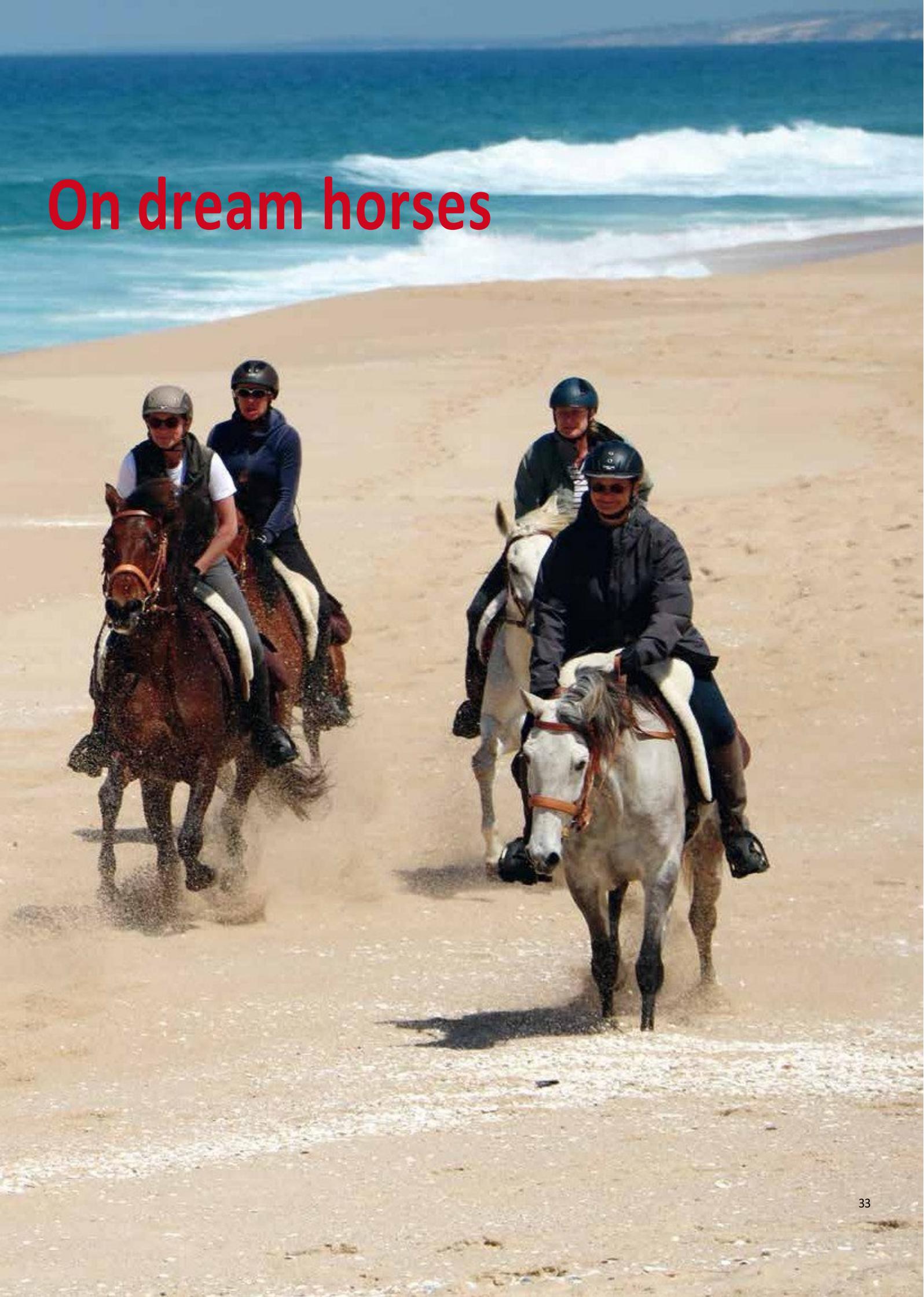
Portugal

Dream holiday



³²In addition to secluded beaches, unspoilt natural paradises and exquisite cuisine, Portugal offers the added pleasure of riding genuine Lusitanos in their country of origin.

On dream horses



High-level dressage

Angelika Kaiser has set herself a big goal: she wants to significantly improve her dressage skills in just one week. If there's anywhere she can do it, it's in Alcainça.



Lusitano – master of collection

My seat and my subtle aids definitely need improvement, and I want to ride well-trained Lusitanos and get a feel for dressage lessons. So I set off from Basel to Lisbon, where I meet my driver Henrique at the airport. Sunshine and warm spring temperatures welcome me. During the drive, Henrique tells me about the history of Lisbon and its surroundings. Just thirty minutes later, we arrive at the A courtyard gate opens onto a small horse world in a wonderful idyll. Henrique shows me my freshly renovated room with bathroom, which is functional and comfortably furnished.

Immediately afterwards, I am welcomed for lunch and get to know my fellow riders: an American woman and a Swedish woman who has been living in London for a long time. The head riding instructor sits at the table and enjoys chatting with his guests. The atmosphere at the farm is friendly, and you immediately feel welcome and at home. The facility consists of

from an indoor riding arena, three outdoor paddocks for the horses, a larger circle where the horses are occasionally allowed to run, as well as a large riding arena, a pool and some seating areas. The perfect place to relax and have some time to yourself. The stables are home to around 18 school horses and a few private horses that are available for riding or for sale. All horses are well cared for and are looked after around the clock.

Horses that are not currently being used for lessons are lunged or ridden. Every horse gets sufficient exercise.

All the horses seem content, friendly and well-balanced.

In the afternoon, I am scheduled to have my first riding lesson and am assigned Xisano, a handsome Lusitano. I familiarise myself with him in the riding hall and am allowed to try out my first lessons, such as shoulder-in and leg-yielding, and prove myself in all three gaits. The lesson is very intensive – just as I imagined it would be.

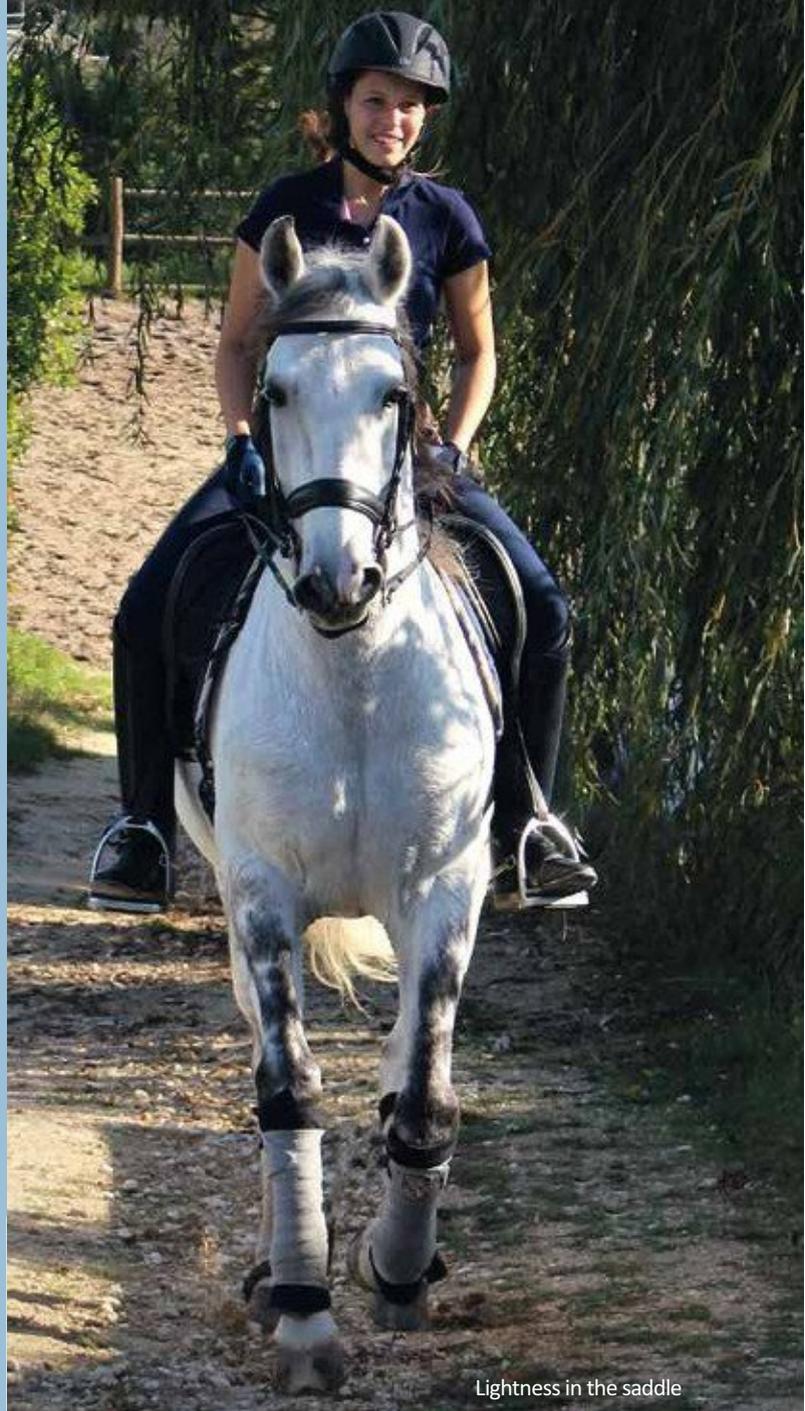
After my first riding lesson, I look forward to a warm shower and dinner with the others. In the evening, there is usually fish, and meat at lunchtime. The food is extremely tasty. Lena, the chef, makes us laugh with her humour. There is a cheerful, sociable and relaxed atmosphere. We round off the evening with a delicious dessert and tasty wine.

Over the next few days, I will have one riding lesson in the morning and one in the afternoon. I get to try out different horses and add a few new skills to my repertoire: half-pass, haunches-in, flying changes, passage and Spanish walk. It takes a lot of effort and concentration to apply all the aids correctly. After a while, however, I begin to understand how to use which weight aids and when, and how to control the horse's shoulders. From the second day onwards, I have a rather strict riding instructor. He makes me repeat the lessons until I can perform the required task on my horse. It's exhausting but helpful. Both riding instructors give their all – they want you to learn and get a good feel for riding. I feel like I'm improving with every lesson.

When I'm not riding, I help groom the horses, watch the masters ride, or relax in the sun with a good book. It reminds me a little of my childhood days – when I still had time to groom and care for horses all day long and spend time with them.

On the penultimate day of my week, we practise galloping, and for the first time in my life, I feel for several moments that I can control the tempo just by sitting properly: I hope that I will be able to do this at home on my own horse. I am thrilled with my progress as a rider and regret that after just one week it is already time to say goodbye to the wonderful horses, the excellent riding instructors and the funny chef Lena. I will definitely try to come back next year.

Angelika Kaiser www.equitour.com/alcsta.htm



Lightness in the saddle



EQUITOUR'S
Owner
Diethard
Franz

Lusitano, a natural dancer



Airy stables



Interview with Mario Cardoso

The art of riding in Portugal



Even as a child, Mario Cardoso felt drawn to horses.
Today, he lives and teaches the Portuguese equestrian tradition.

Alcaíça is one of EQUITOUR's oldest partner establishments, where not only customers but also the EQUITOUR team have come to appreciate the first-class horses and training. EQUITOUR owner Diethard Franz has fallen in love with Portugal and the Lusitanos and has long owned a Lusitano stallion himself. Many guests at Alcaíça will remember riding master Georges Malleroni, who ran Alcaíça for many years. For two years ago, his successor Mario Cardoso has firmly taken the reins of the riding centre and trains horses and riders to the highest standard.

Mario, how did you get into the world of horses?

Unfortunately, I didn't have the privilege of being born into the world of horses through my family. But horses have always fascinated me, and I often sat in the saddle as a child. I graduated from agricultural vocational school and found my way into the profession of riding instructor through internships with breeders and professional riders.

Portugal is known for its horses. What is special about the horse culture in Portugal?

We see the Lusitano as a living cultural heritage, and we feel a strong connection to our horse. It is part of our identity and is deeply rooted in the traditions of our country. We are very proud of our horse breed and live out our passion for riding every day through our work with the horses. It is not a sport, but a way of life. I would say that the character of our horse is unique. The Lusitano is a reliable partner thanks to its rideability and work ethic. It is a joy to train these horses.





Working Equitation

Working equitation and fine dressage are not mutually exclusive. Working equitation combines both into a competitive sport with four disciplines: dressage, style trail, speed trail and cattle work.

The sport originated from working equitation in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. The great thing is that it is suitable for all horse breeds and sizes, and there are competitions for beginners and experts alike.

The disciplines:

Dressage:

Basic gaits, suppleness of the horses

Style trail:

Rideability is tested using trail obstacles

Speed trail:

The trail course is ridden against the clock

Cattle work:

Herding cattle in the correct riding style



Two years ago, you took over the management of the Alcaíça Equestrian Centre, which has been in existence for over 40 years. Can you tell us something about its history and main areas of focus?

This place is special; it feels as if there is neither space nor time here. The founders realised a dream back then. Over the years, the centre has developed into a place where classical and Portuguese riding styles are taught on well-trained school horses, right up to the most difficult lessons.

Equitour / PEGASUS was the first partner to offer this programme as an equestrian holiday. Today, my team and I are continuing this tradition. We enable riders from all over the world to get to know our equestrian culture and our Lusitanos, to improve their technique and influence, and to develop as riders.

Working equitation is becoming increasingly popular. You take part in competitions and teach this discipline. What fascinates you about it?

For me, the partnership with the horse is the most important thing – regardless of the discipline. In working equitation, rider and horse really have to become one. I am particularly fascinated by the canter work, the flying changes and the precision required to master the obstacles harmoniously.

Just as important as a good riding instructor are the horses used for lessons. Can you tell us something about them?

Because we train our school horses here and ride them regularly, we know them very well. They reflect every mistake made by the rider, and we know immediately what correction is necessary. Here, too, it's all about partnership. For me, our horses are the key to success. We welcome riding students with very different levels of previous experience. With the help of our school horses, we meet them at their level and can often noticeably improve their skills within a few days.



Lusitano: Pride of the Portuguese

Do you have a favourite horse? Who is your personal champion and what makes them special?

Yes, Caramelo is my most important partner. He has a wonderful character and has been with us for many years. He is very clever: if a riding student's technique is not quite right for a lesson, he likes to lead them around by the nose. That's his way of telling me, "The riding student doesn't know how to do it yet."

What kind of riders come to you? Who is the programme suitable for?

As a host, it is important to me that our guests are open to our riding culture and really want to learn. For our dressage programme, guests should have basic training and an independent seat and feel confident in all basic gaits. We build on this, introduce them to the lessons and teach them what piaffe and passage feel like.

Working equitation requires a higher level of riding skill. The lessons are conducted at a gallop, so riders must be able to guide the horse in a collected gallop with correct seat, maintain balance and use weight aids efficiently. The basis is dressage, which means we also work a lot on the fundamentals, seat and aids.

Thank you very much, Mario!

The interview was conducted by Marianne Lozza

Wild horse adventure trail



Ingrid Luttenberger dreamed of wild horses. In northern Portugal, she rides not only her friendly riding horse but also meets real wild horses.



When riding, you don't always sit on the horse. Sometimes you sit in gorse, and that's not just the name, as I painfully discover. On a plateau, I spotted a group of Garranos, Portuguese wild horses that live freely here. I dismounted and crept closer. The horses approached, and I crouched down and retreated – into the thorny undergrowth. I didn't dare move, gritting my teeth and holding my breath as a magnificent Garrano stallion came closer and closer. Radiating peacefulness and calm, he scrutinised me. First he sniffs my knees, then he comes so close that his muscular neck hovers above me. Slowly he lowers his head and brings one eye right up to the camera lens. Then he presses his dark, wrinkled muzzle against my left cheek and ear. I sit in the thorn bush and almost cry with happiness.

This encounter with power and freedom is unforgettable.

But first things first: the week-long horse riding tour booked in northern Portugal is called "Wild Horse Adventure Trail". For six days, you spend up to five hours in the saddle. The route leads through the Peneda-Gerês National Park and the smaller Corno de Bico Nature Park. The lush vegetation extends to the coast, which is rightly called Costa Verde (Green Coast).

We are staying at the pretty Quinta do Fijo, an hour and a half from Porto, equipped with pastures, stables and apartments. Carlos and Maddalena take care of their guests, while Freddy is on night duty. Anyone who lets the little tomcat into their room – well, in bed – will be lulled to sleep by his purring. This is very pleasant, because after all, the crucial question remains: will you get the "right" horse?

Riding instructor Carlos knows exactly how crucial this matching process is. He knows his four-legged friends, but he has to assess the two-legged ones. There are also some unorthodox requests ("What a beautiful colour! I want that horse!"). "You'll be riding Pacifico," Carlos tells me at our first dinner. "He's very experienced and can go last." The second most important position after the lead horse – I'm already a little proud of him. The 22-year-old Anna from Germany is delighted because she is getting Marqesh, the horse in her favourite colour.





Impressive: the rare Cachena cattle



A blaze of colour in the nature park

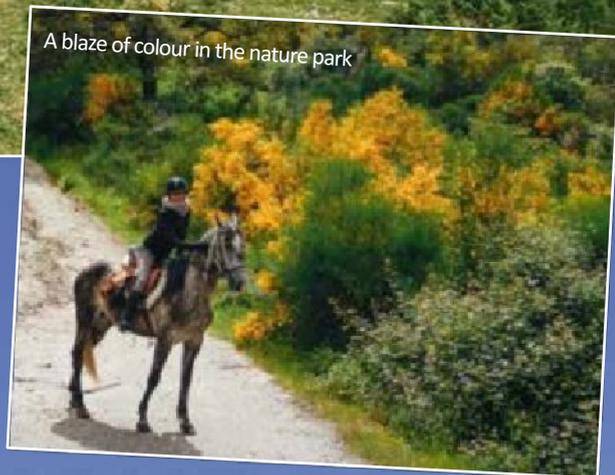


Photo stop at the church



"Hey, I want a bite too!"



"There's always one bitch in the group," Carlos cautiously says to Monique (63), who has come from Australia with her daughter Allysha (29).

"but Petra is a good horse!" Monique yelps in feigned despair: "Why me? Why is it ALWAYS me?" Everyone laughs, the ice is broken. Carlos assigns Nubia, an elegant Arabian mare, to Leon (22) from Germany. We are already beginning to build a relationship with "our" horses in our minds.

On the first morning, we finally get to interact with the horses. We take them out of their stalls, groom them, saddle them up and pack a picnic: pasta salad for us, concentrated feed for the horses, apples for everyone. Then we set off. Residential area, motorway: the very first part of the ride is no fun. But then! Between gardens, villages and ruins, we rode uphill into the green mountain landscape to the Peneda-Gerês National Park, where, in addition to the Garranos, Cachena cattle, deer, mountain goats and even wolves live.

It's Sunday. An old winegrower plays the accordion in his garden. His wife rushes over to sing along when she sees the riding group. No teeth, but lots of heart.

Day after day, we breathe in nature. We pass through mighty eucalyptus forests and cross small stone bridges that could be the backdrop for Game of Thrones. With temperatures reaching 30 degrees in October, the forest sections are a welcome sight, so full of moss and lichen that they resemble something out of a fairy tale film.

We spend our lunch breaks with our feet in a river, in the shade of a church or in a tiny farm shop with two construction workers at the next table. In the evening, our horses are taken care of in pastures along the trail and stay there overnight. We drive back to the Quinta and return in the morning. This allows us to go on a nice long horseback ride and still spend the night in a single comfortable accommodation.

The Peneda-Gerês National Park stretches across high, partly rocky terrain with mountains reaching heights of up to 1,545 metres. This offers magnificent panoramic views of the lush green mountain range. The Corno de Bico Nature Park is not quite as high or rugged. Sandy paths lead through idyllic fairytale forests here.

The riding routes are perfectly chosen, and the trail is also very well organised. Then there are the unexpected encounters. They are a gift. Like on the penultimate day, for example: at lunchtime, we take a break in a mountain village so deserted that we can tie the horses across the road. Then we dive into another world. Twin sisters Olivia and Rosa (80) and Maria (90) live in a small stone house with a wood-burning stove and a spring water basin in the courtyard.

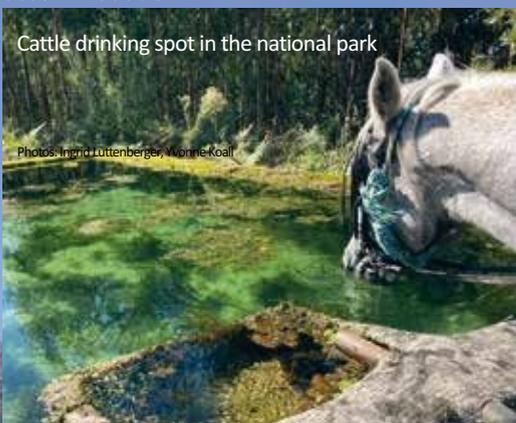
Our group of six receives food and affection for an entire company. The sisters blossom. Maria proudly opens her bun and shows us that she has never cut her hair in her life. Olivia and Rosa beam as they pet the horses, and everyone wants to see photos, photos, photos. When it's time to say goodbye, Olivia has tears in her eyes. She hugs me and wishes us God's blessing. Hopefully, the light bulb Leon changed will last a long time. It's a good thing that most of the riding groups consist of women. Because, "I can't take men to the sisters," says Carlos, "they would worry about their reputation." After all, Olivia and Rosa were never married.

Ingrid Luttenberger

www.equitour.com/portugal.htm

Cattle drinking spot in the national park

Photos: Ingrid Luttenberger, Yvonne Koal



Friends at first sight: Olivia, Pacifico and Ingrid



Here, you forget the time



Portugal

A horse country with heart

Its days as a maritime power are long gone. But the history of Portuguese horse breeding and equestrianism is still of global significance today.





Padrão dos Descobrimentos
the Monument to the Discoveries



Porto old town



Beautiful beaches, nature parks, mountains, modern cities – Portugal has many facets. The entire coastline is almost one continuous beach stretching over 800 kilometres. In the south, the sea is significantly warmer and calmer – making it more suitable for swimming and bathing and therefore more popular. Horse riders prefer the cooler, wilder but also more secluded Atlantic further north, where they can gallop along the beach to their heart's content.

The north is historically significant, as the Porto region is the cradle of the country. It was here that the Portuguese became a country and a nation in the twelfth century. Impressive castles and churches bear witness to the past. Porto, the capital of the north, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its history and historic old town.

In the far north lies Portugal's only national park, Peneda-Gerês. It offers a variety of riding and hiking trails that EQUITOUR customers can explore on horseback. Other nature parks and reserves reveal the country's scenic diversity to visitors.

The Portuguese are down-to-earth and grateful for what they have. Friendly and cosmopolitan, they love to spoil their guests with stories and dishes. And with the world-famous port wine, which comes from Porto. It probably tastes best here, but visitors like to take it home with them and think back to Portugal with every sip.



Typical windmill



With the wild horses in the national park

EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

The EQUITOUR riding programme offers the full diversity of the country. Secluded natural landscapes in the north, charming coastal rides, professional dressage programmes and visits to stud farms breeding the Portuguese Lusitano and Altér Real breeds. The cuisine, culture and hospitality reflect the country's joie de vivre and traditions.

<https://equitour.com/portugal>

Country information Portugal



Size: 92,212 km²

Population: 10.4 million Capital: Lisbon

Language: Portuguese

Religion: predominantly Roman Catholic

Currency: euro

Climate: Hot and dry in the south, cooler in the north

Best time to visit: March to November



Bulgaria

Under the spell of the



Balkans

Despite its rugged charm, Bulgaria is one of the least visited countries. Visitors can enjoy unspoilt wilderness, contrasting geology, a culture steeped in history and a pleasant climate. For horse riders, it sounds like the ideal destination.



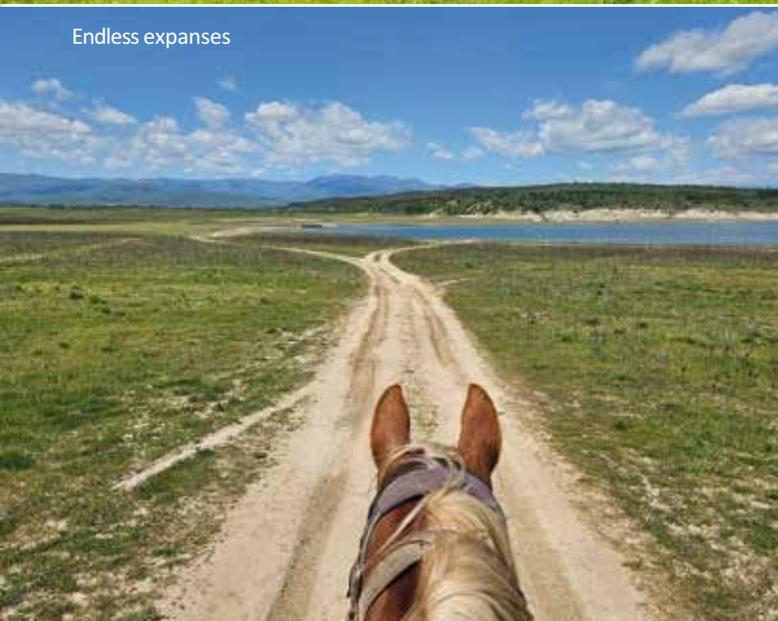
Travel report Bulgaria

Devetaki Plateau at a gallop

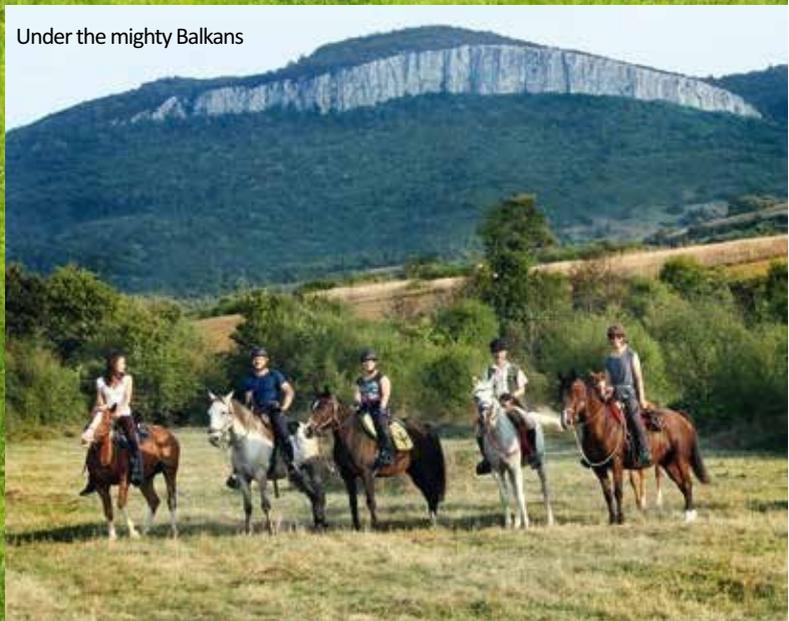
Bulgaria on horseback – that means wilderness, wide open spaces and galloping. Angelika Kaiser doesn't need anything else for her perfect holiday.



Endless expanses



Under the mighty Balkans



After a four-hour drive from Sofia Airport, we arrive at our accommodation. We are my girlfriend and I, along with other participants in the upcoming riding adventure.

Day 2 – My faithful companion Yanko

The next morning, excitement is high: we get to meet our horses. After answering a few questions, I am assigned my four-legged partner for the week – Yanko, the perfect trail horse: sure-footed, calm, yet full of energy and always ready for a brisk gallop. I am allowed to ride him without a bit, which is a new experience for me.

Our group consists of seven riders – a colourful mix from Germany, France, Spain, England, the USA and Canada. Different languages, different riding styles, but we are united by our love of horses, nature and adventure.

We ride through dense forests, along clear streams and across vast meadows and fields.

The endless expanses of Bulgaria invite us to try our first trots and gallops. The light drizzle at the start cannot dampen our spirits, even if we cannot make as much progress as we would like due to the slippery ground in places. The horses nevertheless stride forward diligently and carry us safely down the steeper slopes.

Day 3 – Bulgarian culture and beautiful countryside

After breakfast, we start with some culture – we visit a monastery and a cave. The Dryanovo Monastery is picturesquely situated in a narrow river valley in the Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria. It is surrounded by steep, wooded cliffs and consists of whitewashed buildings with dark wooden elements and red roofs.



Along the river

The Bacho Kiro Cave is located in the rocks above the monastery. It is an important archaeological site where traces of early human settlement have been found. Together, the monastery and cave form a historical ensemble of nature and culture. Then we continue on horseback, trotting northwards past endless colourful fields and meadows before approaching a small canyon whose

A rushing stream accompanies us on our way. We reach the picturesque village of Kereka, where we enjoy a leisurely picnic under old trees and let our souls unwind. Refreshed, we continue our ride and travel a few more kilometres until we reach our destination – a great accommodation with a delicious dinner, an inviting whirlpool and a relaxing sauna – the perfect end to a five-hour ride filled with nature, freedom and adventure.

Day 4 – The city of the tsars

The day begins with a delicious breakfast before we visit the historic city of Veliko Tarnovo, once the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire. In 1185, the brothers Asen and Peter led the uprising against the Byzantines, and Asen was crowned tsar. The city, with over 7000 years of history, is built on three hills: Tsarevets, Trapezitsa and Momina, which are surrounded by the Yantra River. Tsarevets in particular served as the centre of power and is nicknamed the "City of Tsars". Here you can explore the remains of over 400 houses, 18 churches, the royal palace and the execution rock. Afterwards, we ride along the Yantra River and through wide fields and meadows. After each stage of the ride, a lovingly prepared picnic with salad, hot food and desserts awaits us. Coffee, tea and other beverages are also provided.



Stop and marvel



Simple, sumptuous, delicious: picnic in the wilderness



Natural shower under the waterfall



Day 5 – Above the clouds of Bulgaria

After a hearty breakfast at the hotel, the saddled horses await us, and we set off in a north-westerly direction towards the village of Karpachevo. The horses carry us across wide meadows and fields at a brisk gallop.

Soon we reach the spectacular Devetaki Plateau, which at an altitude of five to six hundred metres, offering a breathtaking 360-degree panorama of the surrounding landscape – a moment you would like to capture forever.

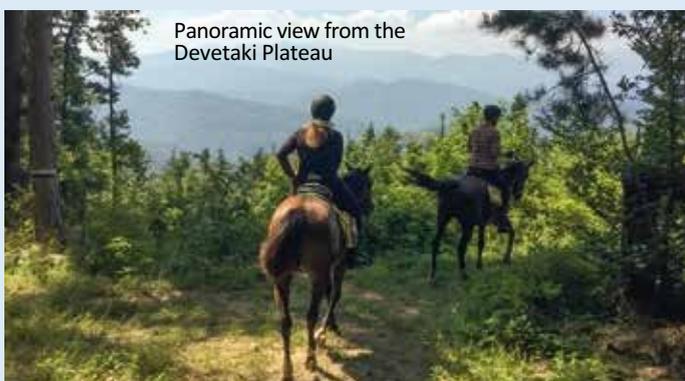
We stop for a picnic under shady trees near the village of Krasno Gradishte and take in the beauty of nature. Refreshed, we continue our ride and finally reach the charming guesthouse. Ongul in Karpachevo, where cosy rooms and warm hospitality await us. After around 35 kilometres and about six hours of riding, the day comes to an end in a peaceful, rural atmosphere – a perfect mix of adventure, nature and relaxation. The guest house is a former school and the rooms are impressively large. In the huge garden, a swimming pool invites you to linger and swim.

Day 6 – Water, rocks and wonders

After a short, brisk ride with lots of galloping across wide fields and meadows, we visit the Krushuna waterfalls. – Turquoise blue water cascades over limestone terraces, the air is cool and refreshing. Afterwards, we head to Devetaki Cave, a huge natural cathedral where scenes from the Hollywood film "The Expendables 2" were shot.



Bubbling Krushuna Waterfalls



Panoramic view from the Devetaki Plateau



Our beautiful accommodation in Ongal

Day 7 – The last ride

After breakfast, we visit the horses one last time. The ride takes us from the village of Karpachevo across the high plateau to the impressive, vertical Garvanitsa Cave – a fascinating natural wonder that descends deep into the rocks. From there, we ride on to the idyllic Lake Kramolin, where we recharge our batteries with a delicious picnic overlooking the lake.

In the afternoon, we travel through the valleys of the Magara and Krapets rivers, past meadows and villages. Many houses with large, beautiful plots of land stand empty, as many residents have left their villages for the city due to a lack of work.

The ride ends in the small village of Kurmiansko, where our horses are loaded up and taken back to the stable. We spend the evening relaxing at the hotel. Seven days full of nature experiences, beautiful rides, small races, warm Bulgarian hospitality and delicious food come to an end – and remain with us as wonderful memories.

Day 8 – Farewell with gratitude

Early in the morning, we set off for Sofia. There is little conversation on the journey – everyone is lost in their own thoughts. This trip was more than just a riding holiday. It was a return to simplicity, to true nature and to the feeling of being part of something bigger.

Angelika Kaiser

www.equitour.com/was008.htm



Tsarevets-the 'city of tsars' with its imposing fortress



Rest stop at idyllic Lake Kramolin

Bulgaria

Treasure trove of the Balkans



A rich cultural heritage, mild climate, mountains, sea and gastronomy – all these things make a country attractive to travellers.

Bulgaria scores highly in every area.

The mighty Balkan Mountains run horizontally across Bulgaria from west to east to the Black Sea. The north is formed by the Danube Plain, with the Danube River forming the country's border. South of the Balkan mountain range lies the Upper Thracian Plain, also known as the Central Bulgarian Basin. Its south-western border is formed by the high mountains of the Rhodopes, Rila and Pirin, which are the highest mountains in Bulgaria. At 2,925 metres, Musala in the Rila massif is the highest peak in the entire Balkan Peninsula. The three Bulgarian national parks are located in the Balkan, Rila and Pirin mountains. Bright blue mountain lakes, nestled among snow-capped

peaks – Bulgaria's untouched alpine landscapes can easily compete with the Canadian Rocky Mountains. To the south-east of the basin, the Sakar and Strandzha low mountain ranges stretch across the border to Turkey.

Thanks to its natural and cultural treasures, tourism is a growing industry in Bulgaria. One of the most important tourist regions is the Black Sea coast. Golden Sands and Sunny Beach live up to their names and are ideal destinations for beach holidaymakers and sun worshippers.



Those seeking more authenticity can hike, cycle and, of course, ride horses in the vast Bulgarian lowlands. Here you will find old villages, historic towns and inviting wine regions. The cultures of the Thracians, Romans, Ottomans and Slavs are combined in art, dance and traditional costumes. Historical sights such as churches, monasteries, castles and palaces are further attractions for visitors. Bulgaria is divided in two not only geographically but also climatically by the Balkan Mountains.

In the Danube lowlands, the continental climate brings hot, dry summers and cold, snowy winters. South of the mountain range, the climate is milder with moderate winters, rainy springs and warm summers.

A visit to the Archaeological Museum in Sofia offers a special insight into history with precious exhibits from the Thracian period, such as the Panagyurishte gold treasure.



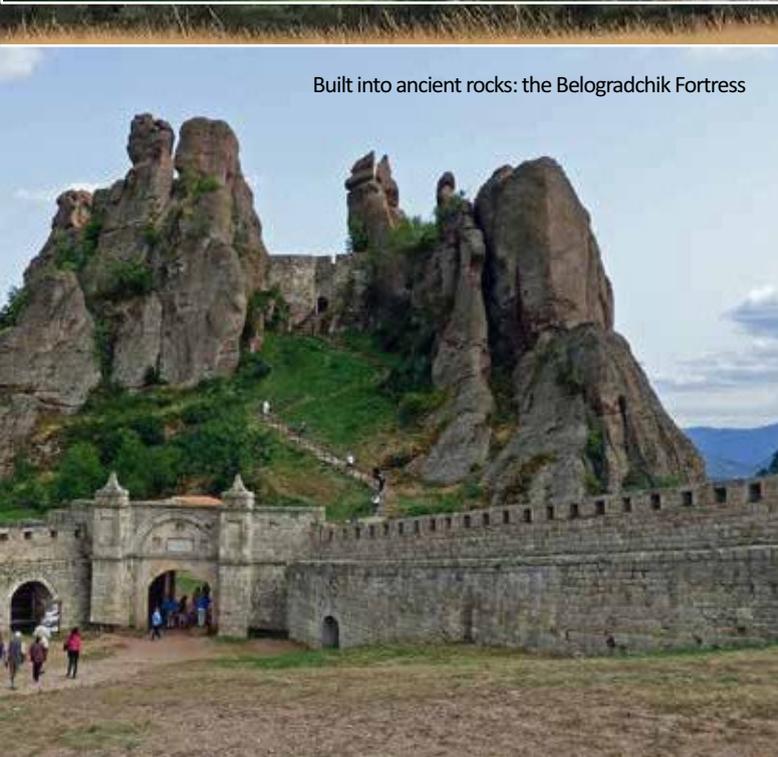
Open at the top:
the Devetaki Cave



The Krushuna Waterfalls
are the largest cascade in Bulgaria



The south gate of the ancient
Roman fortress of Diocletianopolis



Built into ancient rocks: the Belogradchik Fortress



With all the treasures Bulgaria has to offer, it has another big advantage: it is an inexpensive country. The cost of living is almost half that of the United Kingdom. Hotels and restaurants are affordable for tourists. A shopping trip during and after a EQUITOUR riding tour is more than recommended – and not just because of the low prices.

EQUITOUR offers three different riding tours that provide an insight into the many facets of Bulgaria on horseback. On the northern side of the Balkans, you will visit historical sites and buildings as well as extraordinary natural spectacles such as the Devetaki Plateau with its waterfalls and caves. Rides in the mountains offer fantastic views.

Another tour takes you through the land of the Thracians. You climb the Sredna Gora mountain range on the southern edge of the Balkan Mountains and find historical cultural treasures such as monuments and buildings here too. The hotels on this tour offer spa and wellness programmes that are good for you after long rides.

In the third programme, you will ride through the wilderness north of the Balkans, where you will find secluded picnic spots by lakes and in river valleys. Whatever you decide, you are sure to collect wonderful impressions and memories. These are your very own personal treasure.

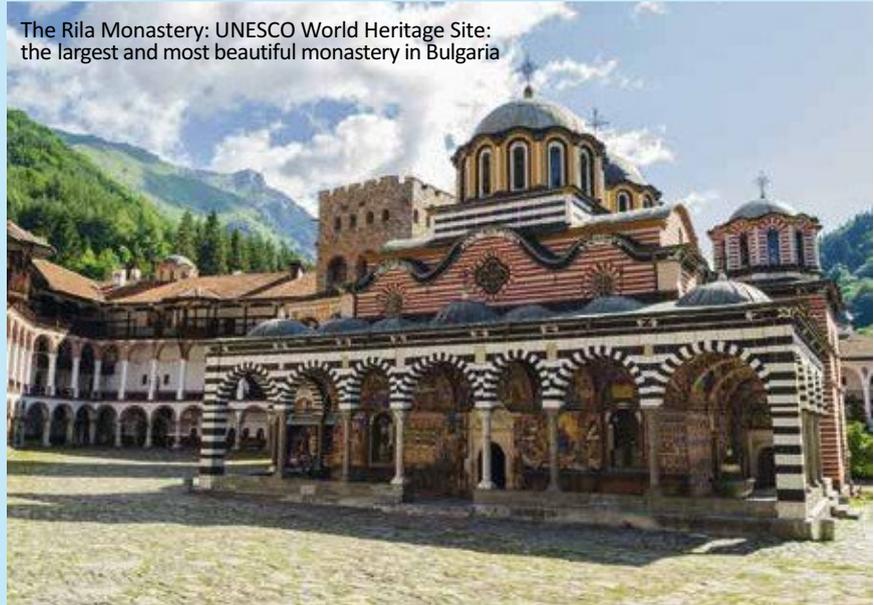


Amphora from the Panagyurishte gold treasure

Панагюрище



Golden Sands: beach and party mile



The Rila Monastery: UNESCO World Heritage Site: the largest and most beautiful monastery in Bulgaria

EQUITOUR HORSE RIDING PROGRAMME



The rugged charm of Bulgaria's wilderness and historic sites guarantees a wonderful stay for riders exploring the country's treasures from the saddle. EQUITOUR offers three riding tours on the northern and southern edges of the Balkans. All programmes offer comfortable hotels and traditional cuisine.

www.equitour.com/bulgarien.htm

Country information Bulgaria



Size: 110,994 km²

Population: 6.4 million Capital: Sofia

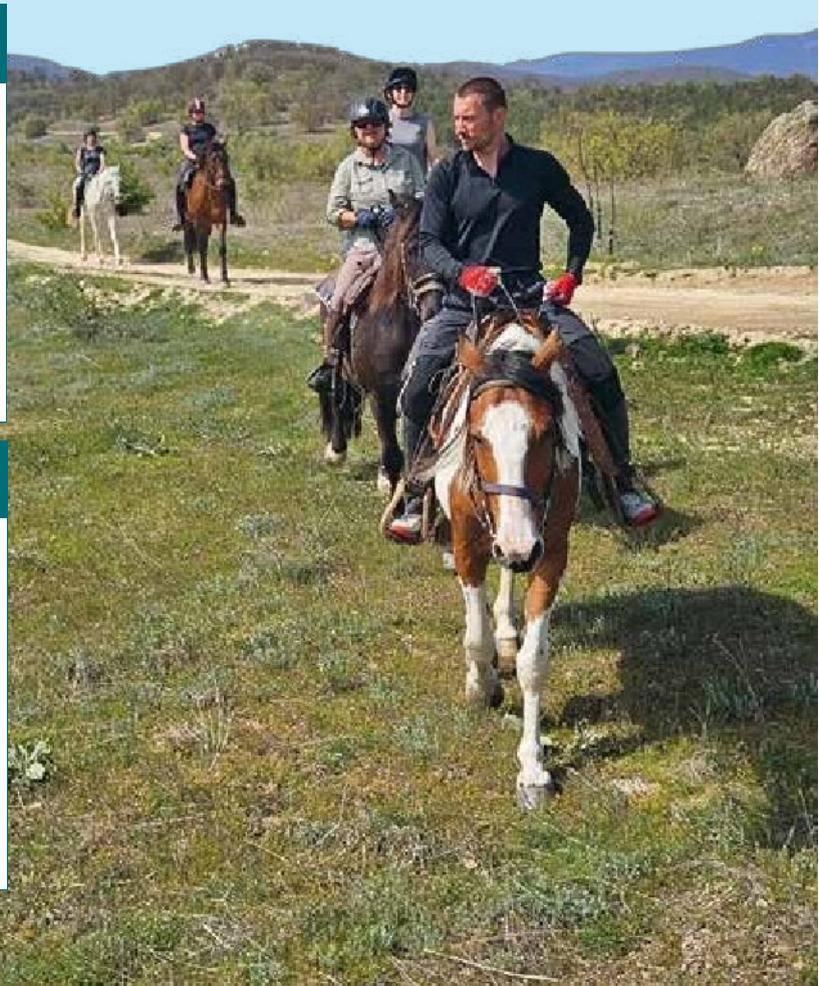
Language: Bulgarian

Religion: Predominantly Christian Orthodox

Currency: Euro

Climate: North: continental climate, South: maritime to Mediterranean

Best time to visit: March to November



Apachi

From semi-wild horse to tour companion



in a paddock fifty kilometres away from our stable. Because the paddock was so huge, Alex and Vasko spent two days catching the stallion.

After bringing him back home, they castrated him. We learned that he had already been ridden a little in the past, so my father and brother finished training him after the castration. He has always been a very intelligent and courageous horse, and has now been working on our trail rides for three years. Everyone who has ridden him so far has fallen in love with him because he is comfortable to sit on and beautiful.

All our horses live together in a large herd. They have a huge paddock, and Apachi is one of the herd leaders. He loves water and sometimes he really gets on our nerves when he drinks and then washes his feet in the troughs, leaving nothing for the other horses to drink. Danube horses are known for their strong character. In our herd, a small Arabian is the leader. Apachi eats and drinks right after him.

Maria Toneva

When my father Alex led the Thracian Trail in late autumn 2021, riding through the Sredna Gora Mountains, a black stallion appeared at Wolf's Peak and followed our horses towards the picnic area. The stallion was all alone in the mountains. He did not react aggressively, but rather seemed happy to meet other horses. We recognised that he was a Danube horse – a traditional Bulgarian breed. We had already had experience with a few Danube horses in recent years. They were all very strong, comfortable and brave. This stallion stayed close to us throughout the picnic.

Soon, the owner of the farm in the nearby mountains drove by in his car. My father Alex asked him what was going on with the stallion, and the man replied that he no longer wanted to keep his herd. The entire herd had already been slaughtered. However, he had been unable to catch this stallion. So he was the only survivor of his herd. Alex then offered to buy the horse, and the farmer gratefully accepted the offer. The only condition was that he had to catch the horse himself.

After the trail ride ended, my father and my brother Vasko returned to the mountains with a van to catch the stallion. A week after they brought the stallion to the stable, he broke out. He wasn't used to living behind fences, so he disappeared for two whole weeks. Friends brought us the news that they had seen him and that he was spending his life alone in the wild, hiding in the forest during the day. A little later, we finally received a call. Our black stallion was caught with forty other horses



Right in the middle: Apachi, a horse with a character

Danubier horse profile

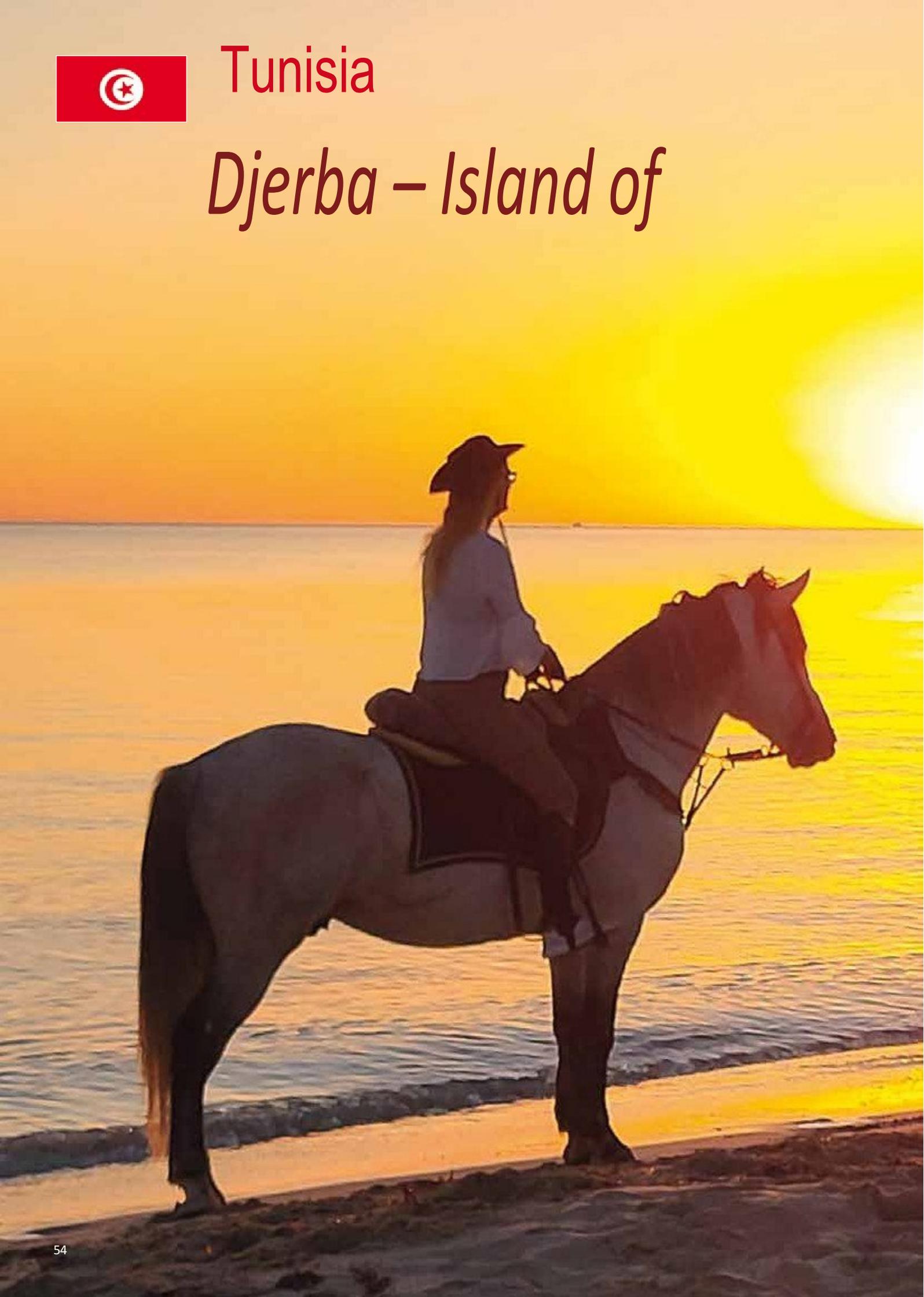
The Bulgarian horse breed was bred as a working horse from 1920 onwards. Initially in the Danube Valley, which is why Danubians are also called Danube horses. Their ancestors are the Hungarian breeds Nonius and Gidran. Later, a finer and more elegant horse was desired, and the breed was refined with English thoroughbreds to create a riding and sport horse. Thanks to this influence, Danubians have considerable jumping ability.

Height: 150 to 155 cm at the withers
Conformation: Strong, stately, heavy warmblood type
Colour: Predominantly bay, black, chestnut
Character: Hard-working, reliable, strong nerves
Characteristics: Persistent, robust, sure-footed
Suitability: Leisure riding, trail riding, driving, jumping



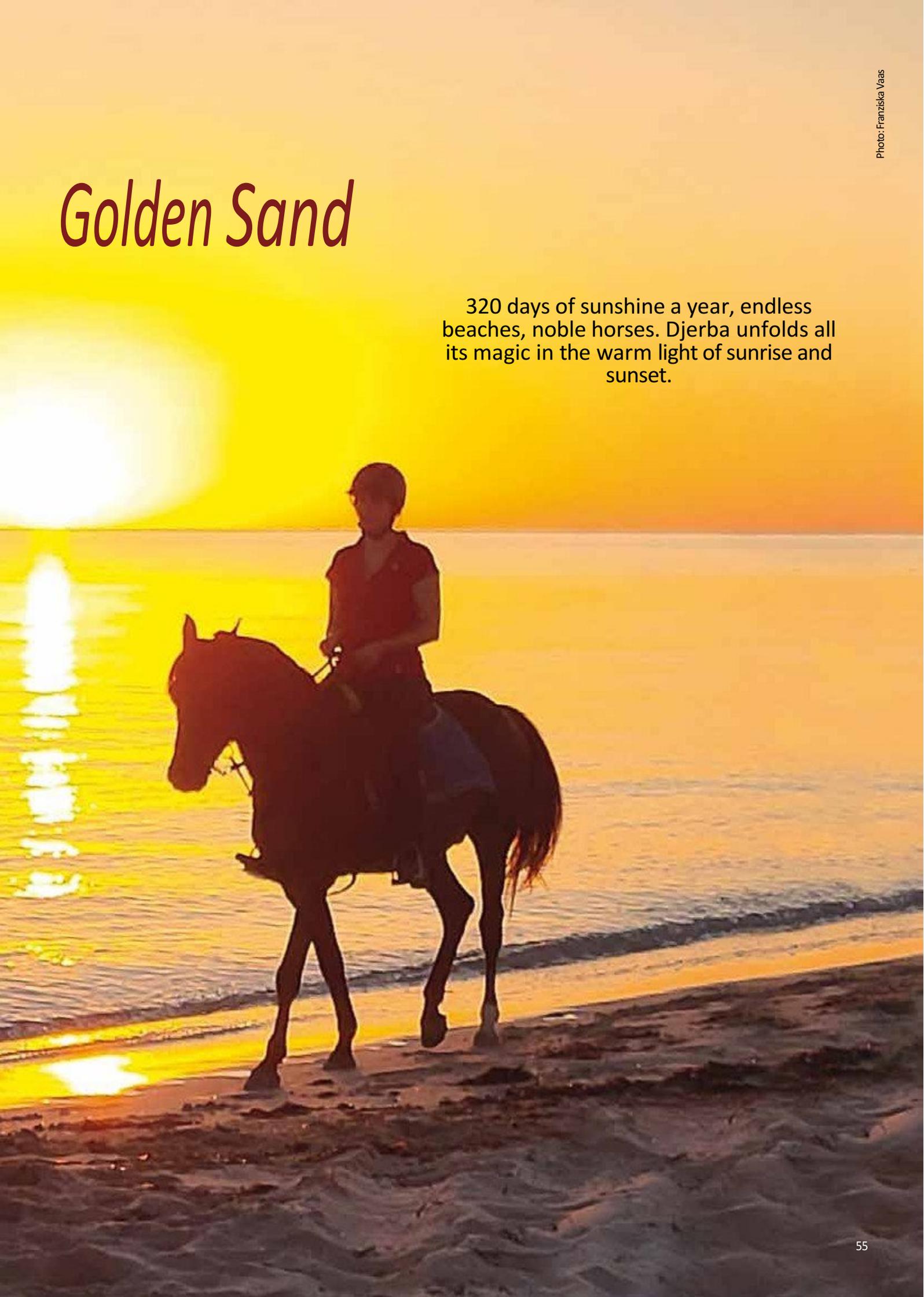
Tunisia

Djerba – Island of



Golden Sand

320 days of sunshine a year, endless beaches, noble horses. Djerba unfolds all its magic in the warm light of sunrise and sunset.



Dunes, palm trees, galloping along the beach



High temperatures and hot-blooded horses await Franziska Vaas in Djerba, where she is extending her summer a little longer at the end of October.



My two friends and I are met at the airport by Majid and taken to the riding stable. After tea and coffee, we are shown around the facilities and our accommodation. There are three double rooms, a bathroom, kitchen and lounge on the upper floor, and another double room with bathroom in the basement.

The horses are mainly Barbary and Arabian stallions, but there are also two geldings, two mares and a donkey on the farm. We are introduced to each horse individually. We are also shown how they are kept and fed. Every day, they receive a bucket full of dates that have been dried in the sun.

In the afternoon, we walk to the beach and refresh ourselves in the sea. At the end of October, temperatures on Djerba can still reach 35 degrees, but the water temperature is pleasantly cool. After our swim, we enjoy our first meal, freshly prepared by Majid. Every evening, we are treated to three-course meals. There are plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruit; the traditional diet in Tunisia is healthy. The spicy harissa paste is a must-try.

The next morning, after breakfast, we set off on our first ride through the countryside. This gives us a chance to get to know the horses. The trail leads through numerous olive groves, past old buildings and palm trees. Our guide Ali gives us an the landscape in an impressive manner. Around midday, it gets hotter and hotter, so we are glad to ride back to the farm. We agree with Ali to ride at sunrise or sunset on the following days to avoid the heat.

The next day, after breakfast, Majid drives us to Houmt Souk. The town has a beautiful old town with charming cafés and shops selling traditional handicrafts.



A rider's paradise with palm trees and sandy paths



In the alleys of Houmt Souk



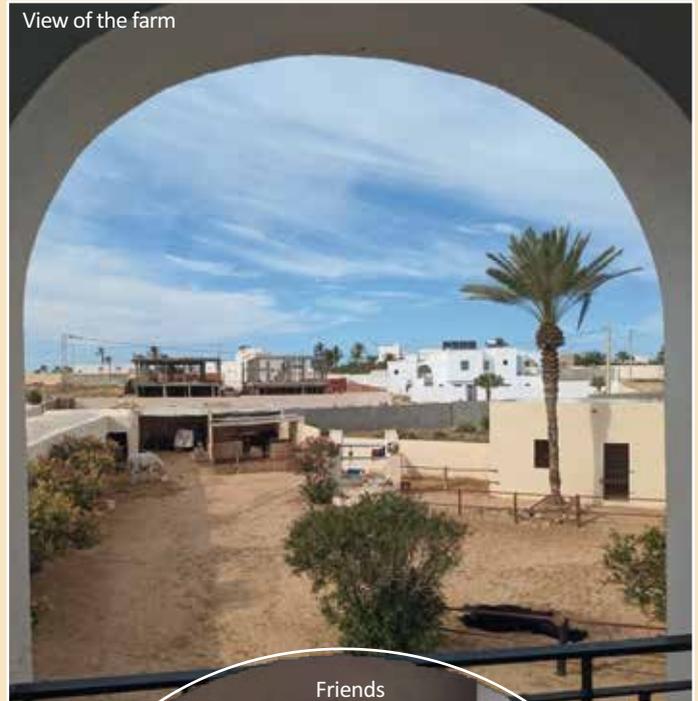
Horses in are kept in paddocks



Ali guides us across the island



On the island of flamingos



View of the farm



Friends

In the afternoon, we go on our first beach ride at sunset. Here, we can trot and gallop for a long time, while Ali and Majid's son take videos and photos. Riding the six-year-old Berber-Arabian stallion Chouchen, I experience the fastest gallop of my life. The farm has horses to suit every taste, but most of them are quite fast. One of my friends doesn't have much riding experience yet, so she rides the well-behaved gelding Nebli. He has a calm temperament, but is still quite fast. Ali takes great care to ensure that she keeps up. After this exciting first beach ride, we look forward to dinner.

The next morning, Majid drives us to the traditional animal market in Midoun, which always takes place on Friday mornings. I have visited many animal markets around the world and seen a lot of sad things. In Djerba, I was pleasantly surprised. On this day, we also take a galloping sunset ride to the Flamingo Peninsula. This headland in the north is a nature park. In the evening, there is a lot of activity, we meet many other riders with horses and camels, as well as quad bikers, all enjoying the colourful sky. We plan sunrise rides for the next two days and get up early. This is my favourite time for beach rides, because early in the morning we have the headland almost to ourselves. In this tranquillity, we have the opportunity to see the shy flamingos. I can recommend everyone to set their alarm clock early and join a sunrise ride.

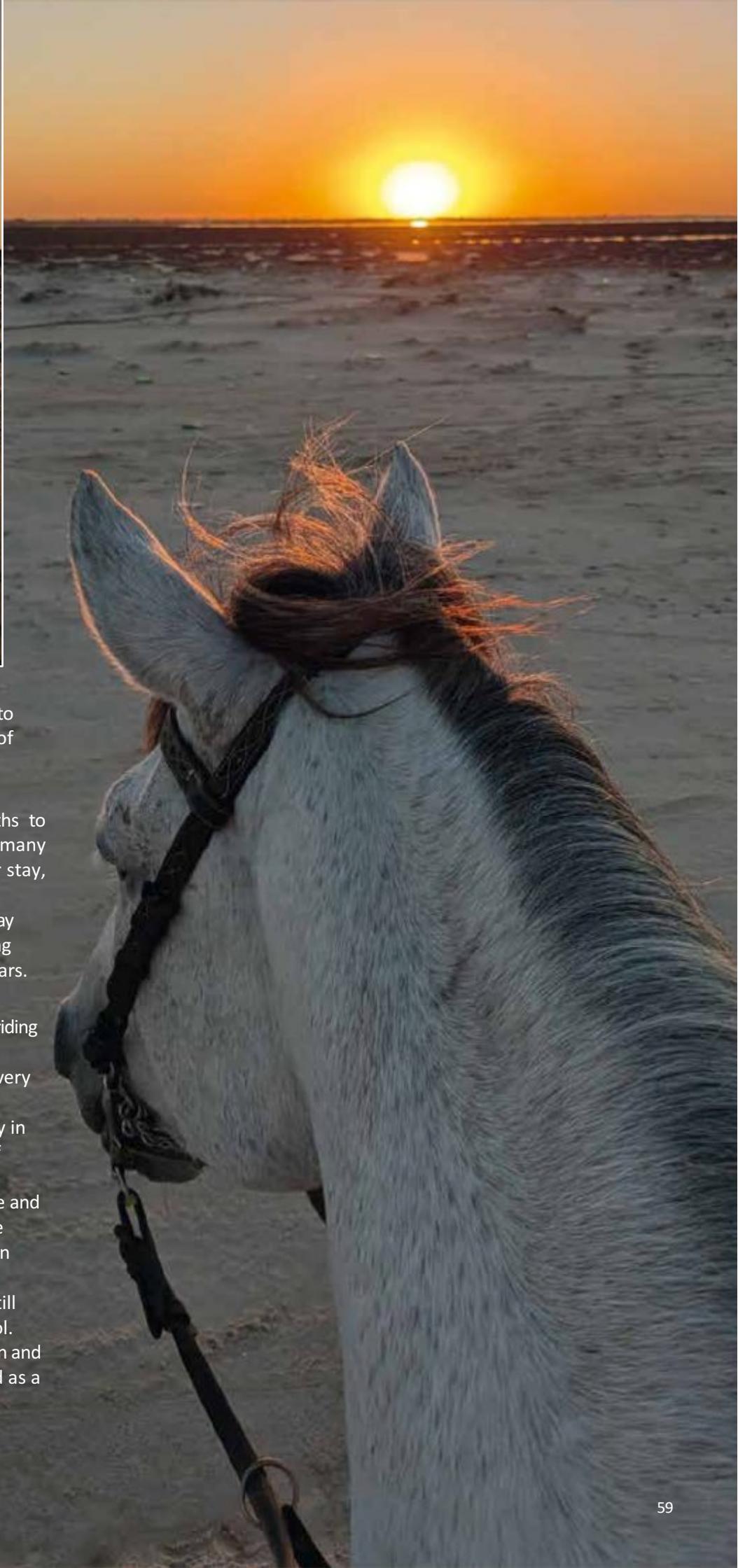
After the morning ride, we are served a hearty breakfast. Afterwards, we have the whole day to go swimming at the beach. On the last day, we go on a carriage ride. This is pulled by the hard-working grey horse Fitouri through

the hinterland. This gives us further insights into the beautiful landscape of Djerba. Fitouri is a favourite with many guests, whether under saddle or in front of the carriage. As a pasture accident between a Berber and a cold-blooded horse, this powerful gelding stands out from the herd. My friend, who has some driving experience, is allowed to take the reins on the coach box from time to time. On the way, we take a break in a small café. This time, Majid accompanies us and he also knows a lot about the nature and history of Djerba.



Fitouri – the reliable carriage horse

The best time for riding:
sunrise and sunset



My conclusion: it is a very nice trip to get to know Djerba. Autumn is the ideal time of year.

Everyone involved goes to great lengths to look after their guests, which is why many regulars keep coming back. During our stay, we also get to know regular guests during our stay who have been enjoying Majid's cooking and the energetic horses for several years.

For my two friends, it is their first horse riding trip and also their first ride outside Germany. You will feel very well looked after with this programme. Djerba is the perfect place for a holiday in the sun and for anyone who dreams of galloping along the beach. We are also delighted by the hinterland with its olive and orange groves. The only downside is the rubbish on Djerba, which can be seen in many places. The beautiful Mediterranean island still needs to get this problem under control. The people of Djerba are hospitable, open and honest. The island is also recommended as a destination for women travelling alone.
Franziska Vaas

www.equitour.com/djesta.htm

Photos: Franziska Vaas

Tunisia

Under the southern sun

Palm trees, beaches, vibrant life. For Europeans, Tunisia is something like the gateway to Africa, where a deep magic permeates the senses and soul.



Tunisia, the northernmost country in Africa, lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert. It is a popular holiday destination thanks to its extensive beaches, reliable sunshine and cultural, natural, artistic and culinary treasures. Olive trees, citrus fruits and dates thrive in the green, fertile north. The centre is a steppe region with salt flats. As part of the Sahara, the vegetation-free south covers the largest area of the country.

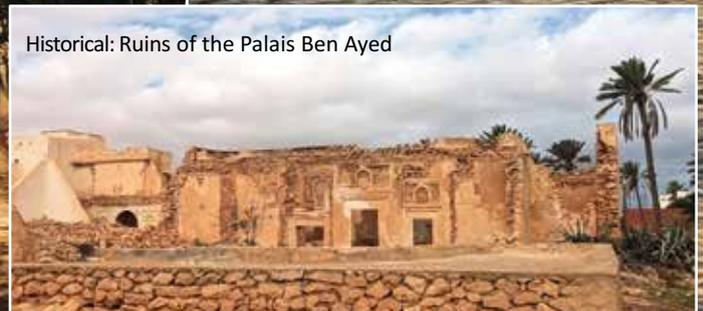
The vibrant towns are mainly located on the Mediterranean coast. Those who want to explore the country can take trips to the desert or to historical sites such as Carthage. Art, architecture and lifestyle bear witness to 3,000 years of eventful history. Tunisia has only been an independent country since 1956. Before that, Berbers, Phoenicians, Romans, Christians, Arabs, Ottomans and finally French colonialists conquered the area and left their mark on the country.



Houmt Souk, main town on Djerba



Picturesque: fishing boats on the beach



Historical: Ruins of the Palais Ben Ayed

EQUITOUR HORSE RIDING PROGRAMME

Djerba is the pearl of Tunisia and the destination of the Tunisian EQUITOUR riding programme. The Mediterranean Sea invites you to swim, enjoy water sports and ride on the beach, preferably at sunrise or sunset. Choose between six-hour star rides to the beach and the hinterland or shorter half-day rides that leave time for other activities.

www.equitour.com/djesta.htm

Country info Tunisia



Size: 163,610 km²

Population: 11.8 million

Capital: Tunis

Language: Arabic

Religion: Islam

Currency: Tunisian dinar

Climate: North: Mediterranean, South: arid

Best time to visit: All year round

Today, in addition to the ruins of temples, entire cities and port facilities, you can also find religious history in mosques, numerous churches and even synagogues.

Markets offer brightly coloured fruits, vegetables and spices. For many, the exquisite Arabic cuisine is another reason to visit Tunisia. Olive oil, dates and spices are popular souvenirs to take home. As are the beautiful Tunisian handicrafts, such as coral jewellery, glassware, richly decorated ceramics and Berber carpets.

The southern flair has a beguiling effect on visitors, who enjoy the warmth and magic under palm trees or in lively fishing villages. of the Maghreb country. Specialities such as couscous, tajine, brik and harissa have long since arrived here, but they taste best in their country of origin.

Are you familiar with the planet Tatooine? It is the home planet of Luke Skywalker, the hero of the Star Wars film series. The filming location for the fictional desert planet is the enchanting island of Djerba, and the film sets can be visited today.

The island of Djerba is located in the Gulf of Gabès and is not only a destination for Star Wars fans and beach holidaymakers, but also for horse riders. PEGASUS customers swing themselves into the saddle of noble horses on the Tunisian island and let the salty wind blow around their noses as they gallop along the beach. The warm light of the island is reflected in the happy eyes of the Djerba travellers.



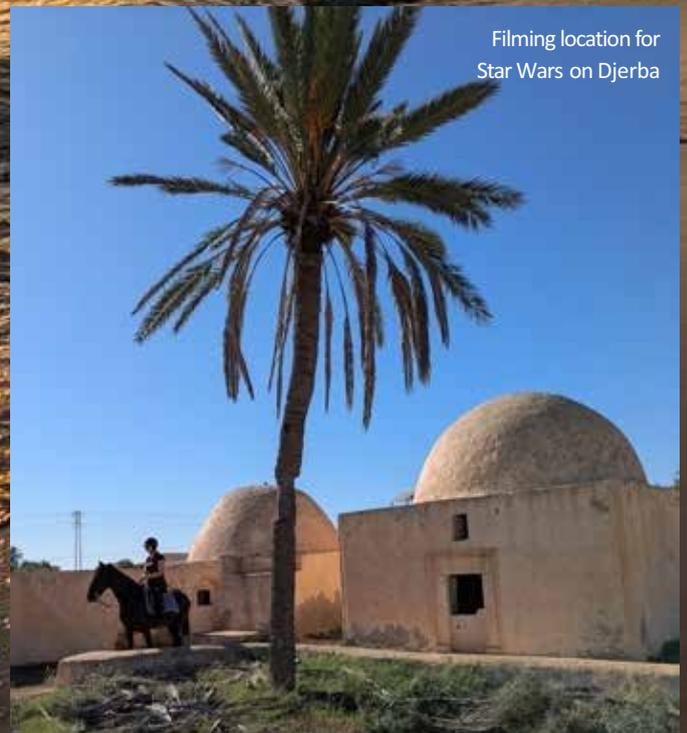
Religious diversity: St Joseph's Church...



... and the Fadhloun Mosque, both in Houmt Souk



Filming location for Star Wars on Djerba



Precious mounts besides horses:
White dromedaries



Holiday greetings from our guests

We regularly receive wonderful photos and feedback from our guests, which we would like to share. For some, it is their very first horse riding holiday, while others have been discovering the world through horse ears for decades. Once again this year, many trail horses have captured the hearts of our guests and carried them to the most beautiful landscapes and panoramas.

Thank you very much for all your messages!



Westport Horse Riding Hotel Ireland, August

In the photo, I am riding McGuire (Irish Cob) and my husband is riding Sylvester (Irish Hunter), both of which are wonderful horses. We were absolutely delighted: very friendly people and a family atmosphere. They catered to our personal wishes. The horses are very sweet, superbly trained, sure-footed and capable, suitable for every taste and individual riding ability. The coastal landscape of Ireland is beautiful and varied. A very nice riding holiday with great rides in a magnificent natural setting, including wonderful beach gallops.

Best regards,
Mihaela Toma, 18th trip



Etruscan Trail Italy, July

I had a wonderful group! It was very small, and we got along extremely well. I would have loved to take my horse home with me. Each of the hotels and agriturismo was unique. We were thoroughly spoiled with food, wine, offers, etc. The tour is varied, and no two days are the same.
Romina Reith, 5th trip



Kyrgyzstan, July/August

Here is my favourite picture from the trip in Kyrgyzstan in July/August this year. The landscape was simply beautiful. It was so great to experience it from horseback. The horses also did a great job and brought us safely over the mountain passes to our destination. It was an unforgettable experience.

Tatjana Scherer, 5th trip



Cider Trail Asturias/Spain, September

The Cider Trail in northern Spain offered fascinating mountain panoramas, cheese and cider in abundance, five porcelain checks and a rainbow photo shoot. The quality of the rainwear was put to the test during the ride, as were drinking stamina and a head for heights.

Carola Leitner, 5th trip



South Africa for connoisseurs, February

I made a very spontaneous decision to go on this trip, but it was worth it. It was absolutely fantastic! I

I would recommend the lodge to anyone who loves nature and animals and wants to experience extraordinary moments in the saddle in a special place. Spotty, with his spotted coat, seemed to want to match the colour of the giraffes and was particularly pleasant to ride.

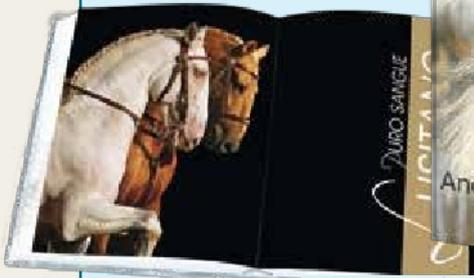
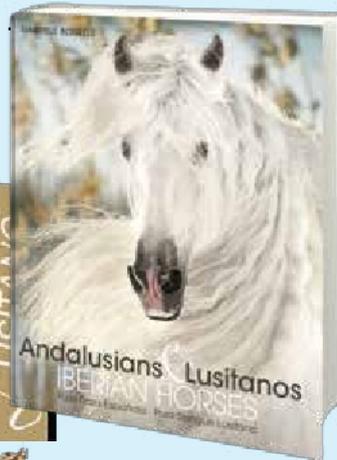
Alexandra Lotz, 1st trip



Book and calendar tips

Iberian horses

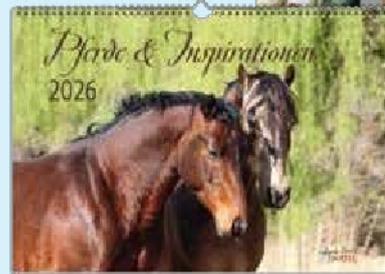
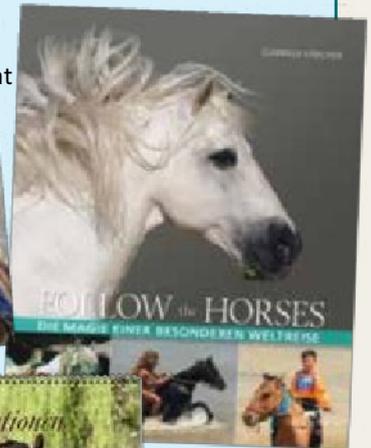
The horses of the Iberian Peninsula enchanted photographer Gabriele Boiselle with their incomparable appearance. She searches the world for extraordinary beauty and immortalises it with her art. Her passion and enthusiasm have resulted in a photographic ode to the Iberian horse.



FOLLOW the HORSES

"Follow your heart and follow the horses"

Hearing this inner call, photojournalist Gabriele Kärcher fulfilled her lifelong dream and discovered horses, people and equestrian cultures on every continent. Her illustrated book and calendars reveal magical moments, ancient wisdom and a love of horses that connects people all over the world.



Boiselle Calendar 2026

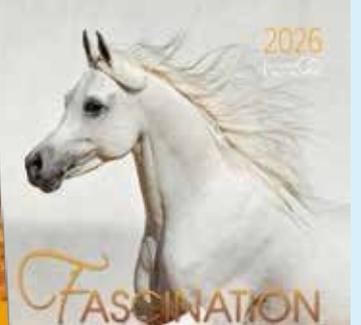
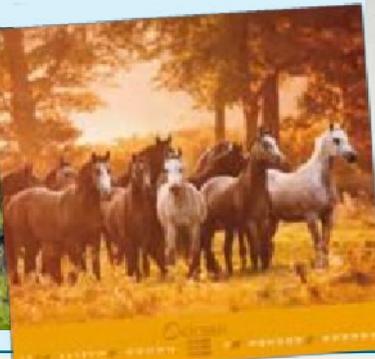
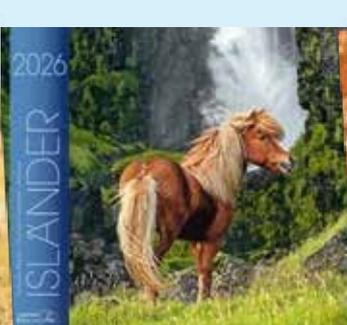
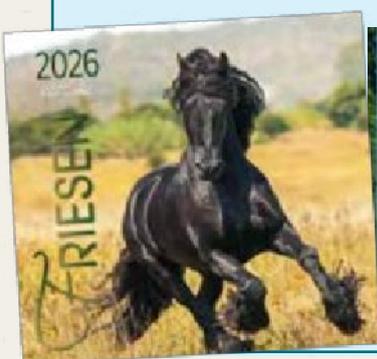
The name Boiselle stands for first-class photographic art with attention to detail and a sparkling enthusiasm for the beauty of horses. Gabriele Boiselle's calendars showcase the magic of horses in a variety of formats.

Programme, information, ordering

www.boiselle-shop.de

Information, orders:

Gabriele Kärcher
www.sorrel.de
GKaercher@sorrel.de



EQUITOUR FUN & FACTS

Interesting facts to amaze and amuse



Horse life under the harshest conditions

Mongolia – Cold

Icy winds sweep across the Mongolian steppes in winter. Temperatures can drop to minus 40 degrees Celsius. But Mongolian horses brave the ice and snow. The nomads' horses are accustomed to the extreme conditions and spend day and night outdoors. They are robust, resilient and rarely get sick.



Namibia – heat

The wild horses in the Namib Desert have to contend with the opposite extreme. A single man-made waterhole watering hole provides them with drinking water, and they find dry grass and shrubs to eat, for which they have to travel far from the watering hole. To do so, they endure temperatures of over 40 degrees, and the only shade is provided by a dilapidated railway station building. Their origin is unclear. They are thought to be descended from local farm horses and horses belonging to the German colonial forces.



Camargue – swamp habitat

The horses in the Camargue face multiple challenges. Summer heat with mistral winds and mosquito infestations, cold Alpine winds in winter, but above all the damp, marshy ground, which would probably cause mud fever in any other horse. However, Camargue horse hooves have adapted to the constant wetness. Another special feature is their diet. Camargue horses can close their nostrils and search for food underwater. They feed on nutrient-poor salt plants, so they are also extremely frugal.



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Travel reports

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www.equitor.com/community.htm

Customer feedback

There is already plenty of feedback on most trips to help you choose the right one for you. Simply select "Customer reviews" on the respective programme page.

Travel companion exchange

New is the Equitour Horse Riding Forum (for now on, only available in German), where you can find fellow riders for your next riding adventure and exchange ideas about the trips.

<https://forum.reiterreisen.com/>



New trips

The EQUITOUR team is always discovering new riding trips for you all over the world, from Mallorca to Georgia, there is so much to discover.

www.equitor.com/neu.htm

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"Once in a lifetime" is the motto of the selected PEGASUS riding programmes, which you should not miss! From horse drives to riding safaris in the Masai Mara...

www.equitor.com/premium.htm

Horse festivals, equestrian traditions

Horse lovers like to celebrate. Their passion is combined with curious equestrian games and competitions with traditional, cheerful and colourful festivals.



Spain: Feria de Caballo, Jerez de la Frontera

The Spaniards' love of celebration is evident every May at the Feria de Caballo in the horse capital of Jerez de la Frontera. Riders and breeders present their horses at breeding shows and sporting competitions. Colourful splendour and vanity are on display in Gonzáles de Hontoria Park, where participants parade in the saddle or in carriages. Their justified pride in their horses and riding skills is accompanied by a good dose of machismo. For travellers to Spain, the Feria is a spectacle worth seeing and a good opportunity to immerse themselves in the Andalusian way of life.



Iceland: Landsmót Hestamanna

This means "national gathering for horse lovers" and is Iceland's national equestrian championship, which takes place every two years. The most spectacular events are the special gaits tölt and pace at racing speed. It's not just the best sporting results that count, because at Landsmót there is also a winner of the dream horse, the best Gæðingur.

Here, the character, energy and talent of the horse are what count. Landsmót is a meeting place for Icelandic horse lovers from all over the world. horses, the best Gæðingur. Here, the horse's character, energy and talent are what count.



Landsmót is a meeting place for Icelandic horse enthusiasts from all over the world.

In 2026, Landsmót will take place from 5 to 11 July in Hólar in Hjaltadal.

Morocco: Fantasia or Tbourida

Tbourida is the Arabic name for the traditional equestrian games of the Moroccans, known to us as Fantasia. Tbourida means "game of black powder", and the huge muzzle-loader is as much a part of the equestrian competition as the noble Berber and Arabian stallions. Competing groups of riders have their horses prance at the starting line before galloping forward and firing their guns into the air as synchronously as possible at the end of the course. Ideally, only a single bang should be heard. This rarely works, but what really matters is the fun and the communal celebration at the edge of the competition.



بوريده



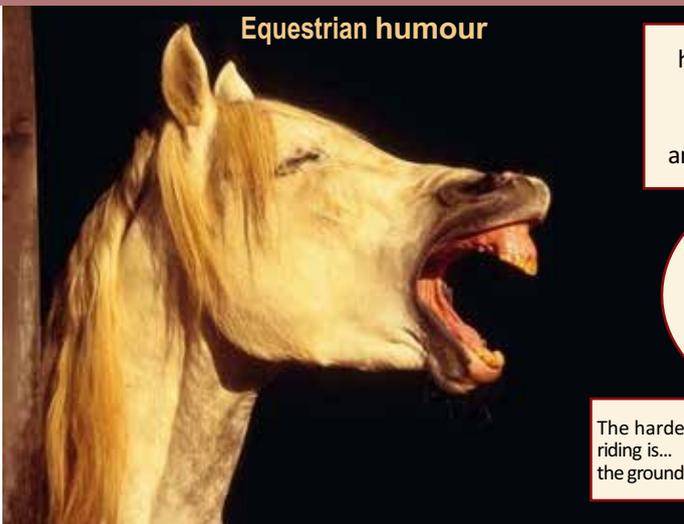
Portugal: Golegã Horse Festival

Autumn is a good month to travel to Portugal.

Not only to soak up the warmth and ride noble Lusitanos, but also to visit the most important equestrian festival: the Feira Nacional do Cavalo in the horse capital of Golegã. On St. Martin's Day, the best riders in the country gather to celebrate Portuguese equestrian art and to present the Lusitano and Alter Real breeds, as well as the Sorraia and Garrano natural breeds. Portugal can be proud of its riding and breeding tradition.



Equestrian humour



horses only scared of two things:
things that move
and things that don't move.

There are many wonderful places in the world, but one of my favourite places is in the back of my horse.

The hardest thing about riding is...
the ground.

A student is riding on square figures on the longe circle. The riding instructor screams:
Where are you from?
-from Cornerstown.

There are more in life than horses...
there are also ponies!



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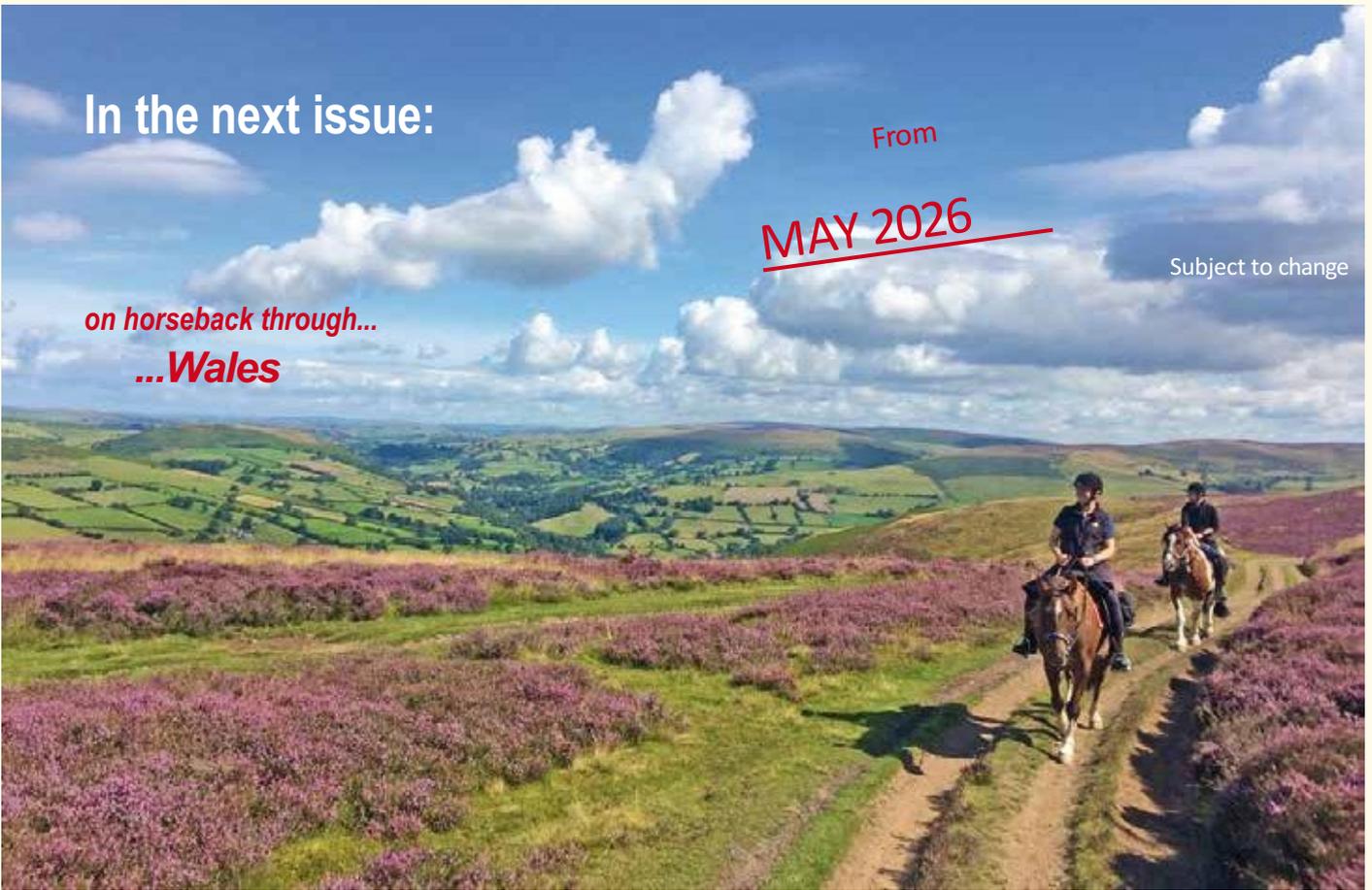
In the next issue:

From

MAY 2026

Subject to change

on horseback through...
...Wales



...Spain



Extremadura

...Brazil



...Turkey



Taurus Mountains

...Senegal





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