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Bay of Somme Trail

4 days/3 nights/4 days riding

Closest airport : Beauvais

Weight limit: 100kg



Discover northern France on horseback with this four-day adventure through the underrated landscapes of Picardie. Riding Henson horses, a hardy, responsive and willing local breed, you'll explore forests, sand dunes, and open countryside, finishing with exhilarating beach gallops along the Bay of Somme.

Each day brings a new perspective on this remarkable region, from peaceful woodland paths to sweeping coastal views. The route also includes cultural visits to historic castles and elegant gardens, offering a glimpse into Picardie's rich heritage. Meals are taken in local restaurants – your horses tied up outside as you enjoy traditional French cuisine.

All horses are ridden bitless, and a horse-drawn carriage accompanies the trail to carry luggage and offer a welcome rest for any rider who wishes to take a break. This is a relaxed, scenic journey combining nature, culture, and the unique rhythm of travelling on horseback through one of France's most unspoiled coastal regions.

The Riding

The riding is relaxed yet engaging, offering plenty of variety across the region's diverse landscapes – from open fields and forests to coastal dunes and wide sandy beaches. Expect between four and five hours in the saddle each day, with a mix of walk, trot, and long canters where the terrain allows. There are fun, winding canters through woods and forests and fast canters on the beach on the final day. The Henson horses, a surefooted local breed, are comfortable, responsive, and perfectly suited to both the green rolling hills inland and the open coastline.

Riding level

This trail is suitable for riders with an intermediate level of experience or above. You should be comfortable riding a horse in open terrain at all paces, including long canters on the beach. A good general level of fitness is important, as you'll be spending around four to five hours in the saddle each day, sometimes over uneven or sandy ground. The pace is relaxed but active, making it ideal for riders who enjoy spending full days outdoors, exploring varied landscapes on responsive, well-trained horses.

The weight limit is 100 kg

Guide and group size

All rides are led by qualified, licensed guides, as required by French law. In France, professional riding guides must hold an official equestrian tourism qualification, ensuring they are trained in horse welfare, navigation, and rider safety. Guides are usually French or Belgian and speak both French and English fluently. Your local guide knows the region well and is adept at ensuring the groups safety, ie by riding single file only on the beach and in open areas. The trail includes a visit to Crecy where the group is joined by a lively historian who shares historical stories about the battles fought.

The group size is 4-8.

The horses

You'll ride the remarkable Henson horses, a rare and distinctive French breed native to this region. Bred from Fjord, Anglo Arab and local saddle horses, Hensons combine the strength and surefootedness of their Nordic ancestors with the agility and calm temperament needed for long-distance trail riding. They are steady, willing and responsive. The breed was created

(by your hosts!) in the late 1970s who wanted a breed that could be the perfect leisure horse. The horses are all dun in colour and are usually between 14hh and 16hh. They have a happy life, living out in huge herds at the farm where the trail begins. Around 50 foals are born here every year.

Tack and riding equipment

Riders use English military saddles (which are harder than traditional general purpose saddles) if you like a softer saddle we recommend bringing a seat saver or similar. All the horses are backed, trained and ridden using a bitless bridle. Saddlebags are not provided as a carriage accompanies the trail and carries any daily essentials, raincoats, water bottles etc that you might need while on the trail.

Accommodation and dining

Accommodation is in welcoming gites (guesthouses) with each night spent in a different location and the horses in a field nearby. The price is based on two sharing but single rooms are available for a supplement. The bedrooms are very clean and tastefully decorated with all linens and towels provided along with Wifi and hairdryers.

Day 1: Riverside cottage

Day 2: 18th century farmhouse

Day 3: Modern gite

Meals are a highlight of the experience – expect the kind of hospitality and flavour that France is famous for. Lunches are proper picnics enjoyed out on the trail, complete with tables, fresh local produce, and a touch of French flair – so much more than a simple sandwich stop. In the evenings, riders dine in local restaurants, sampling regional specialities (seafood and fish is popular in this region) and classic French dishes, often paired with excellent local wine and beer. Dietary requirements can easily be catered for with advance notice.

Itinerary

Day 1

Meet at 9 a.m. at the stables in Rue and begin your journey through the rolling Ponthieu Hills. Visit the Abbaye de Valloires, renowned for its spectacular gardens, before continuing to your charming countryside accommodation. Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 2

Ride through farmland and traditional villages, where every church spire tells a story. In Moismont, visit local orchards and meet the passionate growers who transform their fruit into delicious regional products. Continue through the woodlands of Regnière-Écluse and its

romantic château—an idyllic place to feel like royalty on horseback. Dinner and overnight in a nearby village.

Day 3

Today's ride leads to the historic Crécy battlefield (1346), where English archers triumphed over the French cavalry. After a picnic lunch and guided visit, continue through the vast Crécy Forest, enjoying long woodland canters beneath ancient trees. Dinner and overnight in a traditional guesthouse.

Day 4

End your adventure in style with a thrilling beach ride. Gallop through the surf with the dunes of Marquenterre rising behind you - a perfect finale to your journey. Cross the Maye River ford in the homeland of the Henson horses, then toast your adventure with a farewell drink before departure at around 4:30 p.m.

How to get there

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

The stables are a short and easy drive from Calais (1h15m) if arriving in France via the ferry or Eurotunnel. Otherwise the nearest airport is Paris Beauvais – about a 1h15m drive from the stables. You can also travel by train directly from Paris to Rue, where your hosts can collect you.

Included

- Four days of riding (4-5 hours per day)
- Three nights accommodation
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 4
- Drinks during the trail including local beer and wine
- Transfer from/ to Rue train station
- Entrance fees to all visits mentioned in itinerary

Not included

- Insurance
- Tips

Climate

The Bay of Somme offers a dynamic, temperate maritime climate for horse riding year-round. It is characterized by mild temperatures, frequent invigorating sea breezes, and

unpredictable weather. Because coastal winds rapidly alter conditions across the estuary, riders should dress in layers and prepare for occasional passing showers in any season.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

Travel documents

For entry requirements to France for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements. Having correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & tipping

The local currency is the Euro and almost everywhere will accept card payments. We recommend not bringing too much currency as the holiday is fully inclusive but just enough for souvenirs, drinks outside of meal times etc. Tipping your guide is at your discretion.

Booking conditions

You are booking with the riding holiday operator, these are their booking conditions:

Horseback riding is a risky sport and activity, and can be dangerous. We train our horses to be friendly, confident, and have a good understanding of their surroundings. However, they are released with the understanding that the rider does so at their own risk.

Riding Level

Our tours are primarily aimed at intermediate and advanced riders, but we can accommodate beginners with advance notice on specific tours such as our short breaks. To ensure everyone's safety, please be honest about your riding level when booking so that we can organise the group accordingly. Please note that we reserve the right to refuse or exclude anyone from any outing or activity at our discretion if we believe it is necessary for the safety of our horses and other participants.

Responsibility

Under no circumstances can Henson be held responsible for force majeure, for actions by third parties unrelated to the provision of the services outlined in the Contract, or for

poor performance of the Contract. Furthermore, it is specified that activities (sports activities, excursions, etc.) as well as any , other activity provided by an external service provider, undertaken solely at the initiative of the client, or purchased on-site as an additional cost beyond the package, are in all cases the exclusive responsibility of the external providers managing these activities. Consequently, Henson's responsibility cannot be engaged in these cases.

In the event of misconduct by a client, and without prejudice to any legal remedies Henson may exercise to seek compensation for damages suffered, Henson reserves the right to take any appropriate measures against the offending client, including exclusion. Such exclusion may result in the loss of any benefits and, if applicable, the cancellation of all already reserved packages for future departures. Cancellation in this context will be considered a client-initiated cancellation.

Insurance

It is highly recommended that the client take out additional insurance with an appropriate organisation.

Border control, customs, and other formalities for the entire stay.

To travel smoothly, valid administrative documents are essential, and additional formalities must be completed by clients under their own responsibility and at their own expense. Under no circumstances does Henson substitute for the individual responsibility of clients, who must ensure the verification and obtaining of all necessary formalities before departure and throughout the trip. Non-compliance with formalities, the inability of a client to present valid administrative documents, or the prohibition from entering the territory, remain the responsibility and financial burden of the client, and Henson will not reimburse or replace the service. All information related to these documents and formalities is available from the relevant diplomatic missions.

Your Accommodation

The standard accommodation is in gîte or hotel.

For registered participants, accommodation is mandatory in double rooms, unless the individual is alone, in which case a single room will be provided (with an additional charge). A child must be accommodated in a shared room with their parents and/or guardian(s), or in a single room (only for children over 12 years old), which may incur a single supplement if applicable. It is specified that the beds offered to children sleeping in the same room as their parents may be sofa beds or fold-away beds.

Valuables

During your stay, do not leave any valuables, identification documents, or jewelry unattended in your accommodation.

Espace Equestre Henson cannot be held responsible for the theft of valuables or jewelry that are not deposited in the room's safe or the main safe. It is the client's responsibility to file a report with local authorities if necessary.

Protection of consumer privacy

Privacy and consumer protection are important to us. Sensitive information is stored electronically in our secure database and is only accessible by authorized personnel who strictly adhere to confidentiality procedures. If documents containing personal data are printed for internal purposes, they are kept in a filing system in our offices, accessible only to our staff who handle the files. In accordance with France legislation, we archive the data in files for a period of 5 years. Personal data is only collected if it is relevant and necessary for providing the offered services, including to communicate certain information to the country's immigration authorities. We commit to protecting the privacy of all our clients and users.