

## Epona Trail Riding and Training, Spain

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### Itinerary

#### Day One

Arrive at Seville airport in the afternoon/evening, transfer to Epona Equestrian Centre. It is a twenty minute drive to this unique 16th century Hacienda which will be your residence for the next 6 nights. You will be shown to your comfortable room where you will find tea and coffee making facilities, towels, hair dryer, air conditioning and a fan. There is also a large lounge where you will be provided with free wine and sherry and a smaller sitting room with T.V, video and internet connection. The Hacienda also has an outdoor swimming pool and plenty of garden areas, which you will of course, have time to enjoy in the days to come. Dinner tonight is in the nearby town of Carmona, one of the famous white villages of Andalusia.

#### Day Two

Breakfast and short orientation tour of Epona Equestrian Centre. Fernando and Jane Garcia (your hosts) chose this name for their beautiful 400 year old Hacienda as EPONA was a goddess protector of horses. It would seem that she is very much in evidence in this unique equestrian paradise where all the horses are so beautifully cared for. Riding begins today, in the morning you will be able to relax and get to know the horses as you mount up for The Old Hacienda Ride, a wonderful hack around the immediate countryside, through olive groves and eucalyptus trees. Lunch is included today (Fernando's wife Jane is a wonderful cook). Equitation lessons will take place in the late afternoon. This is a great opportunity to improve your school work on expertly trained horses. Dinner at the hacienda tonight.

#### Day Three

This morning there will be a visit to The Royal Riding School in Jerez. Renowned throughout the world for their breath taking exhibition 'How the Andalusian horses dance'. Their painstaking training methods make this show a real delight as the horses perform intricate and demanding movements with effortless grace and control. A late lunch is included at Epona today at around 3pm. Riding lessons in the cool of the late afternoon back at The Hacienda. Dinner and time to relax and reflect with friends on the experiences of the day.

#### Day Four

Another wonderful trail ride this morning to the Roman Bridge. Depending on the time of year you could be riding through fields of sunflowers, wheat, cotton, oranges or peaches, through olive groves with ancient trees still carefully tended and nurtured. Lunch at The Hacienda followed by time for a siesta. Equitation lessons later this afternoon. Dinner at Epona.





### Day Five

Set off early to the seaside village of Matalascañas, where beautiful Spanish horses will be waiting to take you on the Beach Ride. This ride takes you on an unforgettable route through the Donana Natural Park, one of Europe's true last wilderness regions and one of the largest wildlife reservations in Spain. The ride will take you over the golden dunes, brushing through fragrant wild lavender, rosemary and thyme. The park is home to deer, boar, fox, lynx, imperial eagles, kites, vultures, storks, flamingos and herons. Then it's back to Epona for a siesta by the pool. Rest and enjoy a drink before your early evening equitation lesson. Dinner this evening is a traditional 'paella campestre' under the stars, washed down with home-made sangria....bliss!



### Day Six

We set off across open country once more this morning for our last hack of the week, through olive and orange groves, past farmers working the land until we arrive at the fields of a top class Andalusian stud farm. Return to Epona for lunch. Later today you will be visiting the wonderful and historic city of Seville.



'Sevilla' lies on the banks of the Guadalquivir and is one of the largest historical centres in Europe.

We will be meeting up in the early evening in Seville to visit a traditional Andalusian tack shop before our dinner that will include a fabulous Flamenco Show. You really can't visit Andalucia without witnessing at firsthand the passion of The Flamenco Dance! The origin of this dance is still unknown, although it is generally believed to be a mixture of gypsy and Arabic dance. What is not in debate though, is the passion and fervour of the performers as they combine acoustic guitar with singing, dancing and staccato hand clapping. A night to remember!



### Day Seven

Time to relax this morning and enjoy one last swim before packing up your things and heading back to Seville airport for the flight home.

## Why choose Epona?

Epona's facilities include a floodlit indoor school, 2 outdoor schools, a jumping manège equipped with a variety of show jumps, an international dressage arena, a lunging ring and a pony and beginner cross-country course.

Jane the cook and owner, serves a variety of Spanish and international dishes including a delicious sea food paella on the last evening at Epona.

Optional Activities available on our horse riding holiday Spain package include Spanish language lessons, hiring mountain bikes for hours of fun in the open countryside, booking a massage to ease your muscles after a days riding, carriage driving, tennis at the local tennis club, flamenco lessons and not forgetting sightseeing as Epona is located between the beautiful cities of Seville, which has many spectacular monuments, and Carmona with its rustic charm.

Choosing a riding holiday without personal experience of the centre you are thinking of visiting can be a very difficult task. Here are a few questions that it is wise to ask any centre before you make up your mind:

Many centres will advertise that their horses are excellent for beginners, intermediate and



advanced riders and can carry every weight from a child to a 14 stone adult. However, if you ask how many horses they actually have and how many are actually in work at the time, you discover they only have 8 or 10.

At Epona you will find more than 60 horses and ponies, all well mannered, well schooled and fit for their purpose. With that number they really can cope with beginners, advanced riders and everything in between. It really is possible to match the temperament of the horse to rider and it is possible to change horses if the horse and rider are not getting along. Most of the horses are Andalusians or Andalusian cross breeds but there are also lots of others breeds such as Warmbloods, Anglo-Arabs and Thoroughbreds.

**Are all the instruction staff and ride leaders suitably qualified? Who is actually going to teach you and take you out on rides? Are they bi-lingual? We have all heard horror stories, particularly in Spain, of riders being allowed to go out on unsuitable horses with unqualified instructors and ride leaders and no insurance or first aid knowledge and unable to speak the same language as their guests.**

At Epona every instructor is fully qualified by the BHS and/or ABRS and the Spanish Equestrian Federation. All ride leaders and assistant ride leaders hold diplomas from British Equestrian Tourism and the Federation of International Equestrian Tourism (FITE). You will only be taught or led by bi-lingual staff (some multi-lingual) and all ride leaders carry mobile phones to summon rapid help in the unlikely event that this is necessary.

### **The British Horse Society Award**

2005 was an emblematic year for the Epona Equestrian Centre. After 20 years of consistent family activity with effort, enthusiasm and professionalism, Epona celebrated its 20th anniversary, and one of the most recent and greatest satisfactions was that Jane Garcia, the owner, was honoured to receive the B.H.S. Overseas Award. This is the first time that this award is presented to a centre outside of the United Kingdom.

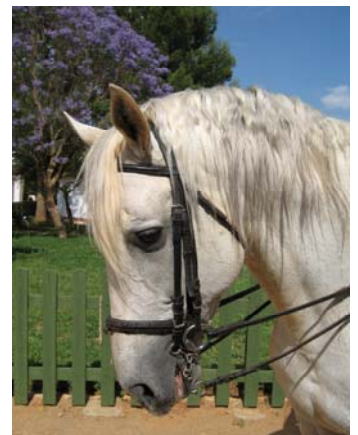
### **What's included?**

*Included in your horse riding holiday Spain package price:*

- 6 nights accommodation in shared twin rooms
- 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches and 4 dinners at Epona
- Transport to Jerez for Royal Riding School display
- 3 trail rides (approx. 3hrs each)
- 1 beach ride (approx 3 hours)
- 4 one hour equitation lessons
- Airport transfers from Seville
- Trip to Seville for sight seeing & Flamenco Dinner

*Not included:*

- Entry fee to Royal Riding School Show (25 Euros)
- Flamenco Show and Dinner (65 Euros)



### **Prices**

**£1090 per person in a shared twin room**

**Single supplement of £210 for 6 nights**

This holiday can be run as a 5 night stay from Sunday to Friday but we do need a minimum of 4 riders choosing this option.



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