

# Outlaw Trail, Catalonia, Spain

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## Day 1

The Outlaw Trail is a challenging trail following a route into France and back through the Pyrenees mountains.

You should be an experienced rider fit enough for between 4 to 8 hours in the saddle each day.

Please note that it is necessary to lead your horse on foot on some sections of the trail. Sometimes the ground can be rocky and uneven and you will be required to hike both up and downhill whilst leading your horse. It is important that you wear boots which provide support for your ankle and which have a non-slip sole.

The area you ride within used to be frequented by legendary bands of outlaws, the so called Trabucaires. The Trabuc is a firearm with a trumpet shaped muzzle and fired tiny pieces of iron at its target. The bandits who used the Trabuc were nicknamed the Trabucaires.

The following is the proposed itinerary but please note that changes are possible due to weather and local conditions. On occasions the itinerary may run in reverse.

You are met and transferred to the horses' base at Mas Alba (or other accommodation of equal standard). Mas Alba is a typical Catalan natural stone house dating from the 16th century. Since that time, this wonderful farm has been run by the same family. From here you overlook green meadows, forests and the horse pastures.



## Day 2

After meeting your horses in the morning and after grooming and tacking up, you set off and the path you follow soon turns into thick forest. Your trail will move in loops through the hills and around the edges of fields, occasionally clattering through villages built of natural stone.

Later you cross the river taking you nearer to the mountains of the Pyrenees.

Tonight you stay in a house made of stone.



## Day 3

The journey from your accommodation takes you to the Garrotxa Mountains through varying terrain that changes from gentle to rocky and steep.

A picnic lunch beside a freshwater pool provides the opportunity for a rest.

After lunch you continue climbing through the forest, climb a pass with a beautiful view of the high Pyrenees peaks, ending your day's ride with a steep descent into a medieval village. This evening you stay at a little hostel by the river.

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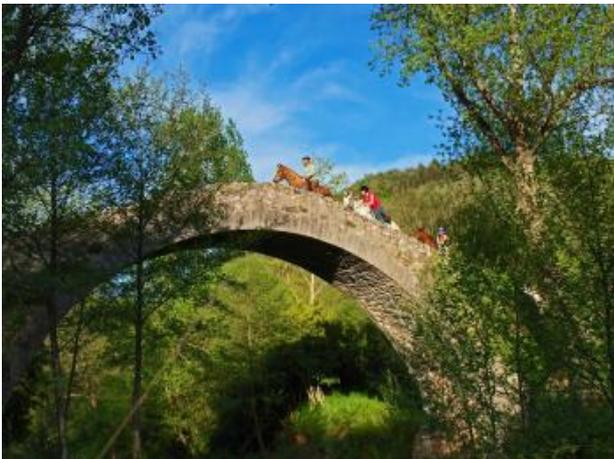


#### Day 4

This morning you ride towards a lake climbing past the durmast oak and cork oak trees. Once at the lake you should be able to enjoy some canters before your picnic lunch stop.

After lunch you will really start to feel like you are getting closer to France and following a rustic path you eventually cross the border. This pass was often used as an escape route by both the outlaws and the Catalan Republicans during the Spanish Civil War of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thick forest of beech and chestnut trees creates a feeling of mystery and intrigue along the way.

Tonight you stay at a simple but cosy guesthouse (Hostal de Trabucaires) which in years gone by was the preferred meeting point for the outlaws.



#### Day 5

You look onto the Canigou mountain, which at 2,700 m is the highest point in the north and the peak is considered to be sacred in Catalan folktales. Your ride will then pass through the Albera mountains and take you back into Spain.

Magically somewhere between the mountains and valleys, a stunning castle rises from the forests. Even today nobody knows who occupied this castle and so over a saddlebag picnic lunch you may ponder this question, and dream of a time where knights lived and rode the same paths as yourself with their trusty steeds.

This afternoon takes you to the foot of the Albera mountains and into the lowlands of the Emporda. You ride towards a converted castle at the foot of the mountains where you stay for the night.



#### Day 6

You ride through ancient olive groves and wine fields. Accompanied by the clatter of your horses' hooves, you pass through medieval natural stone villages and reach the last Pyrenean foothills in the east. Your four-legged friends managed the ascent like mountain goats. Once arrived at the top, you have a breathtaking view of the rugged coastline of the Costa Brava. Here the Pyrenees sink into the deep blue Mediterranean Sea!

The path winds steeply down into a picturesque bay. Once on the beach it's time for cava, picnic and swimming.

Your last night is spent in the fishing village of Llanca.



Day 7

After breakfast, your stay in Catalonia ends - but the memory of this exciting Outlaw Trail will remain with you for a long time!

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