

FINCA el MORO – A WEEK OF RIDING IN THE SIERRAS, NORTH OF SEVILLE



The rolling hills of the Sierra de Aracena, 100 kms north west of Seville, provide perfect riding country. Tracks connect the pretty white villages. Broad caminos offer companionable riding through a great variety of landscape. Lush secret valleys show abandoned farms lost in tangles of aromatic citrus and rockroses. Ride along hills and ridges with distant views of Templar castles or the remains of a 10th Century Moorish Calipate.

2007 Departures: Every Saturday from Seville (shorter rides may be available – ask for details).

2007 Cost: \$2815 per person, based on 2 people sharing a room. Single supplement \$210

Tour price includes: Collection transfer and return to Seville, experienced riding tour guide and a groom, luggage transfer between stops, full board and accommodation (lunch & dinner are not included in Seville) - three nights are spent at Finca el Moro, and three nights in charming small sierra hotels. A fitting end to the week is a luxurious night in the atmospheric city of Seville.



Horses: Fit strong Andaluz cross breeds, 15 - 16.2hh, forward going and sure footed. ridden in comfortable vaquero tack (similar to western), they are well-behaved and responsive mounts and are stabled overnight in the villages along the way.

Riders: should be competent at all paces and comfortable riding for between 4-6 hours a day. There is no jumping so fit but 'rusty' riders are fine! This program is not recommended for beginners

Contact OUTDOOR TRAVEL or your travel agent for more details, brochures and reservations

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Spring comes early this far to the south of Spain. The mimosas, cherries and wild narcissi in February. Peonies and lavender soon follow and the villages fill with the heady scent of jasmine and orange trees. Autumn is the time of the sweet chestnut harvest, a blaze of changing colours with a gourmet's feast of wild mushrooms. Fit, forward-going and responsive andaluz crossbreeds makes riding effortless and fun. The collected canter of the andaluz horse makes the long days in the saddle a pleasure

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Sunday: Meet at Seville and drive into the Sierra and *Finca el Moro*; a journey of one and a half hours.

Monday: 4 hrs riding. After breakfast a few moments to accustom you to the vaquero tack and to feel happy with your horse and you are off. Cantering north across the sierra to Valdelarco and tapas lunch in the plaza. On after lunch up the river valley and passing vineyards and cherry orchards you return to *Finca el Moro*, where you can relax, make tea in your cottage, have a swim or a siesta before a dinner.

Tuesday: 6 hours riding. To Castaño de Robledo, a route giving wonderful views all the way to Portugal. A stop for lunch at the village of Aguafria. Afterwards along the southern face of the sierra to the historic village of Almonaster La Real. The rooms look out onto the C10th mosque built on the remains of a C1st Roman temple

Wednesday: 5 hours riding. Time to visit the mosque before leaving for the day spent riding the gentle country of the foothills. Cork and cattle country. Through aromatic pine forest with views over the hills rolling down to towards the coast. Lunch in Santa Ana and finally to arrive in Alájar. The night spent in the recently restored coaching inn, the village full of pomegranates, bougainvillea and orange trees. A C16th century shrine to the legendary Queen of the Angels looks down on you from the cliff above.

Thursday: 4 hours riding. An easier day, first to the charming village of Linares for lunch, where the old spring fed washhouse is still in use in the square and the houses are famous for their intricately cobbled front steps. Then onto Aracena, in time for shopping and the evening 'paseo'. The floodlit Templar Church and Castle is on the hill above. Overnight in the family run - Hotel Sierra in the centre of this pretty and lively market town.

Friday: 6 hours riding. An exhilarating final days ride. Through the rolling cattle and cork country around the lake carpeted with wild flowers in early spring, black vultures and honey buzzards sailing the thermals overhead. Mostly private land it is in a corner of the real Spain that is not often visited. Finally we arrive back at the farm - *El Moro* - the journey complete. Back to your cottage and room to relax before a splendid valedictory dinner.

Saturday: Leave after breakfast to the ancient and evocative city of Seville. The narrow streets perfumed with orange tree and the walls covered in tangles of jasmine and plumbago. Your hotel is a very comfortable converted former 'casa señorial' now a 3*** Hotel. You are in the heart of the old town near the C13th Palace and the Cathedral. Chances to stroll the streets lined with palm trees, purchase wonderful ceramics, or sit and watch it all from the pavement cafés.

Sunday: Tour arrangements end after breakfast. Perhaps to visit the Cathedral or the Sunday street market before making your own way to the airport.

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