

# Backcountry Riding & Lodge Trip in Banff



## Highlights

Staying in two different historic lodges, this authentic backcountry riding and lodge trip in Canada will take you deep into the heart of Banff National Park. The grand Rocky Mountains provide a constant backdrop as you traverse this spectacular landscape.

The second designated national park in the entirety of North America (after Yellowstone) and the first of Canada, Banff National Park encompasses over 2,500 square miles of rugged Canadian countryside. Featuring some of the most epic geology you're ever likely to see on this planet, it's hardly any wonder that Banff is one of the world's most popular national parks and attracts around four million tourists every year.

That's not to say you'll feel crowded. Other than your own group, you're likely not to see a soul as you explore the Rocky Mountains and the surrounding glacial plains. Your mode of transport will be horseback, by far the best and most historic way to tour the Banff's natural beauty.

This is a backcountry riding tour of immense proportions. The rush of adrenaline as you reach the top of a 8,000ft pass and look out over the untamed Canadian outback will almost literally knock your socks off. There are plenty of therapeutic moments along the way too - the inter-lodge ride is a perfect chance to relax back into your saddle and enjoy the peace of the surrounding nature.

For anyone who fancies playing cowboy (or cowgirl), this is a thrillingly authentic week in which you get to not only enjoy some excellent riding, but also stay in not one but two comfortable backcountry lodges, one dating back to the 1920s and used by early pioneers. You can also expect to form a strong bond with your horse, who will be your traveling companion and reliable mode of transport for the duration of your time here.

## Is it for me?

There are no specific requirements to the tour other than a level of fitness commensurate to beginner's horse riding, spending around six to eight hours a day in the saddle riding at a walking pace. All guests are recommended to do a few hours in the saddle before your trip to get your body used to a horse's movement. A good mountain morning stretch also helps!

Travellers are able to leave excess luggage at the tour office at the start of the week and are limited to taking no more than 30lb of luggage per person on the tour itself, and packed in a soft-sided bag. The reason for this is that your day gear will be transported by mules along with supplies to the lodges.

Bringing a saddle bag is a good idea to store things like sunglasses, sun cream, cameras etc. while you're riding. Saddle bags are for hire at the tour office, please reserve. Rucksacks are not permitted, since they are uncomfortable for horse and rider.

## Accommodation

You will stay in two different lodges; the Sundance and Halfway lodges, which have been providing adventurers to the park with a welcome break for decades.

Prices from

**963** GBP (6 days) per person

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The Halfway Lodge used to be a single-storied cabin until an odd turn of events occurred one night in 1967 - to the complete and unimaginable surprise of the guests that evening, a bear fell straight through the roof, prompting the subsequent addition of a second floor to the structure. Halfway sleeps fourteen people on a single-bed basis across its four rooms, and after a restful night kept toasty by a wood stove you'll wake up to views of the towering mountains right on your doorstep.

Sundance Lodge is situated next to Brewster Creek and over watched by the Sundance Mountain Range. It sits on the original site of the horse corral for Ten Mile Cabin. The cabin was built by the Canadian Pacific Railway back in the 1920's. The cabin itself remains standing and was declared a historical site in 1990. It was used as a refuge for mountain guides and packers traveling to Mount Assiniboine, whose names you can still see carved into the logs. Sundance Lodge sleeps 30 in ten sleeping rooms and has a spacious living room and cozy kitchen.

All meals are included in the tour and comprise of hearty western meals. Most dietary restrictions and allergies can be accommodated; please advise at time of booking.

## Itinerary

This is the itinerary for the 6 day trip. Shorter stays are also possible - please contact us for more details.

**Day 1:** Tour begins with a group meeting at the Banff tour office at 9:30am before being transported by van to Warner Stables. There you'll meet your guides and horses and mount up for the ten mile ride to Banff Sundance Lodge via the glacier-fed waters of the Bow River, Healy and Brewster Creeks. For those with a vehicle, free parking is available at Warner stables for the duration of the trip ( directions will be available from the office once you check-in.)

**Day 2:** After a hearty breakfast at Sundance the adventure continues southward with a ride up to Halfway Lodge. The trail winds along the historic Strom pack trail with the rugged Sundance Range dominating the eastern horizon.

**Day 3:** Riders will mount up with cameras armed for the day's ride up Allenby Pass. For many this is the highlight of the trip as you climb to an impressive elevation of 8,100 feet!

**Day 4:** After a warm good-bye to the cook and Halfway, the winding trail leads back along the Brewster creek to Sundance Lodge. This will be home for the next 2 nights.

**Day 5:** The day begins with a hot, ranch-style breakfast which is good fuel for the ride up to (the fittingly named) Fatigue Creek. At midday, you and your horse can enjoy a restful break in the Fatigue Valley while the lunch mule is unpacked and coffee is brewed. The lofty heights of the Continental Divide provide spectacular vistas of both Alberta and British Columbia.

**Day 6:** On this final day you'll saddle up for a gentle ten-mile ride from Sundance to Warner Stables, arriving at approximately 4:30pm and concluding the tour with a warm farewell.

## Details

### Getting there

Banff is located 80 miles west of Calgary International Airport and is accessible by regular shuttle bus or rental car.

### Price includes

Professional guides, use of horses/pack mules, 5 nights lodge accommodation, all meals for the duration of tour, luggage storage, transfer from tour office to stables.

### Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed