

EQUESTRIAN TOURISM IN FRANCE

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Edito

Equestrian tourism is a very appealing and an environmentally friendly activity which encourages participants to discover our regions. Combining fun and an exciting getaway in perfect harmony with the horse and the natural environment, it is popular with people of all ages. Far from the hustle and bustle of our day-to-day lives, equestrian tourism offers a welcome breath of fresh air and a timeless experience on horseback.

Serge LECOMTE
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A booming activity

Equestrian tourism proposes a wide range of activities and meets the needs and aspirations of those who love nature and horses.

Practised in a club, as a family or among friends, outdoor horse riding offers a chance to get close to a horse and to forge a real bond with the animal during unforgettable adventures.

More than a million people practise it on a regular basis and 53% of the French population state that they would like to go on a horse riding holiday.

Promoting Equestrian tourism

Within the French Equestrian Federation, the French Committee of Equestrian Tourism handles the promotion of equestrian tourism activities.

It carries out a number of national showcase activities including the Equirando, Journée Nationale de l'Attelage de Loisir (National Equestrian Leisure Driving Day) and Sustainable Development Week.

It publishes *L'Estafette*, a quarterly publication for equestrian tourism enthusiasts and the *Cheval Nature* catalogue, a directory listing equestrian tourism establishments.

Horseback holidays

Equestrian tourism trails are the ideal way to discover the culture and natural heritage of the various regions. From a short ride lasting just a few hours to a full trek lasting several days, on horseback or by carriage, there is something to suit all tastes and all levels.

Thanks to a coherent network of equestrian trails and accommodation presenting required services to receive horseriders and their mounts, equestrian tourism offers a chance to enjoy beautiful getaways.

A boon for regional development

Crossed by numerous equestrian tourism trails, territories take advantage of economic benefits produced by equestrian tourism activities: accommodation, meals, shops and services, tourist sites etc.

Working with the outdoor leisure sports and natural land management organisations, equestrian tourism is a part of rural territories' activity and helps preserve the areas in which it is practised.



A brief history lesson

The French Association of Equestrian Tourism was founded in 1963 and continued its activities until 1987 before becoming the French Delegation of Equestrian Tourism. Depository of the organisations which preceded it, the Comité National de Tourisme Equestre (CNTE - French Committee of Equestrian Tourism) has been working since 2000 to develop and promote horse-related tourism activities. It acts on behalf of more than a million enthusiasts.

Today, the CNTE is helping to raise the international profile of equestrian tourism. The International Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Équestre (FITE) was founded at its initiative.



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Equestrian tourism: key data



1 million enthusiasts

2 500 horse riding establishments and associations

400 Equestrian tourism centres

The marked-out equestrian trails and gîtes

The CNTE manages the official horse trail markers, registered with the INPI. The 4 orange markers and the specific markers for horse-drawn vehicles guarantee the ease-of-use along the length of the horse riding trails and the identification of outdoor equestrian activities for users.

A training course in horse trail signage conveys genuine field skills.

A map of France showing the horse riding trails for each region and department can be consulted in the «Equestrian Tourism» area of the FFE website.

Treks on horseback lasting several days require stop-offs at gîtes and stopovers. Numerous topographical guides mention the accommodation facilities located along equestrian trails.

The preservation of sites of practice

Consultation with outdoor leisure sports and involvement of equestrian tourism in the decision-making bodies of local authorities helps to ensure the preservation of sites of practice.

Incidents encountered when hiking can be reported on Suric@te, the platform for outdoor players.

The training of riders and professionals

Equestrian tourism enthusiasts can obtain recognition of their skills via the trekking diplomas, Galops® de pleine nature («Outdoor Gallops» diploma), skills certificates or horse drawn transport certificates.

In order to provide totally safe equestrian tourism activities, specific professional qualifications are issued:

- **Horse riding assistant organiser (AAE)** specialising in outdoor horse riding, to initiate children or adults to equestrian activities and to lead short rides.
- **Equestrian tourism guide (ATE)** to lead independently short rides and treks.

The quality approach

Two federal labels identify top-quality equestrian tourism services:

- the **Centre de Tourisme Équestre** label makes it possible to identify Equestrian establishments specialised in the organisation of equestrian tourism activities: walk, trek, stay...
- the **Cheval Etape** label concerns establishments welcoming ponies and horses for stopovers of at least a night, in indoor or outdoor accommodation.



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GRAND ITINÉRAIRE ÉQUESTRE

To promote equestrian tourism routes, the CNTE offers a brand designed to enhance thematic, historical, cultural or cross-border routes: the "Grand Itinéraire Équestre".



As the heir to the event of Polignac in 1961, Equirando offers a chance to enjoy horse riding and discover the regions on horseback. It is one of the largest European events for riders and drivers practising outdoor horse riding. Equirando is held every two years and Equirando Junior every year.



Founded in 1975, the FITE organizes, develops and promotes throughout the world equestrian tourism, TREC and Traditional working horse riding beside the FEI. Chaired since 2015 by Frédéric Bouix, it now has about twenty members.