



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## ARGENTINA

### ESTANCIA LOS POTREROS 2024 - 2025

#### RIDE INFORMATION

Estancia Los Potreros is a 6,500 acre working cattle farm in the heart of the beautiful region of Cordoba, some 500 miles to the north west of Buenos Aires. Situated in the “Sierras Chicas” at an altitude of 3,000 feet, Los Potreros has been owned by the same Anglo-Argentine family for four generations and the main house is steeped in family history. It is now run by Kevin Begg, who personally oversees the ranching, riding and guest activities on offer, taking huge pride in sharing the land and lifestyle he loves with his guests. The estancia is well located within its own, utterly peaceful, un-touristed countryside yet is easily accessible, just 30 miles from the university city of Cordoba. With over 90 riding horses and a maximum of just 12 guests at one time, it is a fantastic base for keen riders wanting to experience authentic rural argentine life and gaucho culture and, with a perennially warm welcome, lovely walking, bird watching and wild swimming, as well as wine tasting, mountain biking, excellent golf courses and historic buildings to visit locally, it makes a great base for non-riders too.



#### DATES

Los Potreros is open to guests year round except for May, June and July when it normally closes for renovations. You can stay anything from 3 nights to 2 weeks, with a minimum of 7 nights generally recommended to ensure time to settle in, enjoy the activities offered and scenery further afield. Between 15th December and 8th January the minimum stay is 5 nights. Dates are flexible and organised to suit, although Sunday afternoons are set aside as rest time with no riding then. The estancia can be booked exclusively for groups of 6 or more adults, making it a wonderful option for a group of friends or two or more families.

## HORSES

There are about 130 horses in all at Los Potreros including breeding mares and foals. The horses are Criollo (the local Argentine breed) and Criollo crosses of between about 15hh and 16hh and there are also a number of Peruvian Paso horses many of which are home bred using the estancia's Paso stallion. Paso horses, originally bred for covering the huge distances on large Peruvian estancias at the most comfortable gait possible, were first brought to Los Potreros by Kevin's father Robert. They have a natural 4 beat lateral gait, a unique characteristic that was developed and has been preserved through selective breeding and which makes a pure bred Paso horse the smoothest and most comfortable riding horse in the world. Now nearly half the horses at Los Potreros have Paso blood and the estancia's Paso stallion, Pisco Sour, is always keen to show off in front of a crowd. Criollo horses arrived in Argentina with the Spanish and still are widely used for working cattle. They are strong and sensible but also extremely responsive, athletic and forward going making them a real pleasure to ride.

## TACK

The horses at Los Potreros are ridden in the traditional South American (similar to western) style so are used to neck reining and go best when ridden with a relaxed, loose contact with the mouth. Saddles are British military style, with a comfortable sheepskin on top, with polo saddles and gaucho & Chilean style saddles also available. Saddle-bags are provided where needed.



## RIDING

The riding at Los Potreros is very flexible, with hours tailored as far as possible to suit. There are morning and afternoon rides out each day (no riding on Sunday afternoon) as well as long picnic rides to explore. If you wish you can ride for 4 to 6 hours a day, or equally you might choose to join just a morning or afternoon ride of between 2 and 4 hours. Weather and ground conditions allowing, there may be an opportunity to try your hand informally at polo with a 'stick and ball' session with the gauchos, although this is always dependent on ground conditions and in times of draught the polo field may be too hard to use. You can also join the gauchos in gaucho games 'Destrezas de gaucho' - racing for the 'sortijo', barrel racing and the like are all great tests of horsemanship - or with their cattle work, helping round up cattle for sorting or a head count and / or rounding up the yearling horses. Riding groups are small, generally a maximum of 8 guests (usually less), divided according to ability, and all rides are led by an experienced English speaking guide with helpers on hand to look after the horses at all times.

## WEIGHT LIMIT

**Weight Limit** There is a weight limit of 90kgs / 14st 2lbs and 85kg / 13st for polo/paso horses.

## PACE

The pace of the riding at Los Potreros can be varied to suit, with plenty of opportunities for fast canters and also for more relaxed riding for those who prefer. Some routes are rugged and quite steep in places with narrow paths through scrub and woodland where the pace has to be slow, but there also lots of open plains, grassy valleys and soft dirt tracks that are ideal for exhilarating canters. The pace is relaxed but well varied overall.

## RIDING EXPERIENCE

Los Potreros is ideally suited to reasonably experienced riders who wish to explore the surrounding country on a responsive, well-schooled horse and who are comfortable, relaxed and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and fast canter. To get the most from the riding and horses you should be used to riding in open country and over varied terrain as there is a variety of going - grassy plains, narrow tracks through the scrub forest, rugged hills to climb and small streams to cross. The estancia is, however, also a good choice for less experienced riders with a good selection of horses to suit riders of different abilities and, as the riding hours and pace can be adapted to suit, novice and less experienced riders are also well catered for. Children are welcome but the minimum age is 10yrs and children wishing to ride should have previous riding experience and be able to control a horse independently. You will in any case, enjoy the riding much more if you are fairly riding fit so if you don't ride regularly at home, we recommend you accustom yourself to the hours in the saddle with some regular training before you go.



## POLO

Whilst it is not a dedicated polo estancia (the hills don't help), Los Potreros has strong polo connections. Part of the estancia was once owned by polo legend Lewis Lacey, one of the world's first 10 goal players and one of the few to have played polo for both Great Britain and Argentina—also the man credited with 'inventing' the polo shirt as we now know it. The aim of the polo at Los Potreros is to introduce and encourage players to start enjoying this fast invigorating game, to build on any skills you may already have and for you to leave bursting to play more. If conditions allow one morning each week may be given over to polo when all guests have a chance to play—always subject to weather and conditions—and extra sessions can be arranged by prior request for an extra charge. Bespoke Polo packages with tuition can be arranged on request, conditions permitting, minimum 2 guests.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES & FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Los Potreros is a super choice for families and for non-riders as well as riders. The estancia offers some wonderful walking, with several peaceful routes through the hills to explore river valleys and rocky canyons, to watch the exotic bird life, swim and picnic by a waterfall. Learning to lasso with the gauchos, watching their horsemanship roping cattle or playing the gaucho game of 'pato' and racing for the 'sortija' is fun for all - even if you do not join in.

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## OTHER ACTIVITIES & FAMILY HOLIDAYS cont.

There are also often informal wine tastings, the swimming pool is a lovely place to relax and mountain biking and cooking lessons can also be arranged. There is an international paragliding site close to the estancia, world-class dove shooting and three excellent golf courses in the vicinity as well as fishing of sorts. The estancia setting is remote but a taxi ride or a lift can take you shopping to Rio Ceballos (13 km), to La Falda (17 km) or La Cumbre (35 km) or you might arrange a day trip to Cordoba, an interesting University city, or take time to visit some of the areas many Jesuit churches, Estancia Santa Catalina (founded in 1662) or the dam at Embalse San Roque. Depending on the time of year, there may well be other local fiestas and attractions such as the folkloric festival at Cosquin, the Rodeo at Jesus Maria or one of many smaller annual cattle sales or branding festivals. Children are welcome at Los Potreros and thrive on the peaceful rural freedom, swimming in rivers, natural rock pools and waterfalls, rounding up horses and cattle, playing polo and 'gaucho games' and riding with the gauchos, who are fun and natural teachers and eating wonderful home-grown food. It is an ideal destination for a family holiday.

## TERRAIN

The Sierras Chicas rise to a height of 7,500 ft, running parallel to the main Andes. They are an older mountain range than the Andes with some varied terrain and wonderful views onto the 'pampas' below. The lower slopes are forested, mostly with acacia, cocos and molles, then as you climb higher, the trees become smaller and the forest more patchy, with clearings of tussock and pampa grass. Higher still, the hills are barren but for the 'paja brava', a hardy tussock grass which grows at high altitude and provides cattle with grazing in winter when there is nothing else left. The hills hide rocky valleys, open meadows carpeted with wildflowers and dramatic gorges with waterfalls. There is always an interesting variety of bird life including vultures, eagles, partridges, doves, several different kinds of parrot, the tiny burrowing owl, brightly coloured hummingbirds and the mighty Andean Condor is slowly returning to the area. Foxes and hares are often seen whilst riding and puma, wild boar and small deer



## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation at the estancia is simple but comfortable, providing you with all you need whilst retaining a wonderful feel of history and authenticity. The estancia itself consists of several whitewashed single storey buildings in the traditional style, and some bedrooms are separate from the main house. It is preserved as much as possible in the original colonial style and furnished in keeping, with tiled floors, rugs and traditional furniture and fittings. There are 7 guest bedrooms in all, each with wood burning stove or fireplace to take the chill off the mountain air and (as of September 2024) all with ensuite bathroom (with either bath or shower). Extra touches to ensure you are comfortable - hot water bottles when needed, cosy dressing gowns and good quality bed linen—have all been thought of and are provided. Electricity is by wind turbine with a back up diesel generator. The estancia team make you feel extremely welcome and the atmosphere is relaxed and informal. Guests have free use of the drawing room—ideal for relaxing by the fire or meeting for drinks before dinner—and during summer 2024 a new guest space / dining hall is being added to give more room for sociable dinners, asados and activities such as yoga and tango. Outside there is a swimming pool—unheated so generally only open November to early April—a lovely place to relax after riding with views over open fields. Meals are either eaten 'al fresco' on the veranda or at a long table in the dining room (and with Argentines traditionally eating late, children served earlier and separately from adults). The maximum guest number is 12, although bigger private booking are possible.



## MEALS

Food is excellent and a high point of any stay. Bread is baked daily, vegetables are home-grown and home-made pasta and plenty of delicious Argentine beef are regular features. Days start with a cooked breakfast for those who wish or you might choose muesli with yoghurt, fruit, bread, toast and homemade jam. Lunch and dinner are often a traditional Argentine 'asado' (barbeque) with delicious home reared beef or lamb, accompanied by fresh salads, home-made bread and cheese, washed down with good Argentinean wine. Los Potreros has its own label of locally made wine and the various local grape varieties make for interesting wine tasting - Kevin is always delighted to share his appreciation of local wines. Vegetarians will be well catered for - the estancia cooks take great pleasure in creating delicious meals of all kinds but please give us prior notice of any special dietary Requirements when you book.



## WEATHER

Cordoba is known for its good weather and healthy climate - 'siempre de temporada' (always in season) is the old slogan and the estancia is open to guests all year round (except sometimes in May / June when repairs / improvements are often carried out). The climate can vary but it is generally sunny and dry, particularly from April to October, the winter months. The Argentine summer, November to March, is the rainy season although rain is generally not intrusive and it is still often sunny. In June, July and August, it can be cold at night but is usually warm and sunny in the middle of the day - average temperatures for January, the hottest month are between 17 and 30 degrees C, and during July, the coldest month, between 5 and 17 degrees C. The sun can be very strong so hats and good sun protection are recommended year round.

## WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

## ITINERARY

Itineraries for a stay at Los Potreros are flexible and tailored as far as possible to suit. The following is an **example** for a 7 night stay - although do note it is just an example. Activities are weather dependent and day-by-day arrangements are always subject to change. They may be altered by your hosts in their absolute discretion.

**Day 1** Collected from Cordoba Pajas Blancas Airport and driven about an hour to Los Potreros (check-in from 14.00). Meet your hosts over a cup of tea before being introduced to the gauchos and horses. Then, if time allows, join a late afternoon ride for your first taste of the stunning landscapes you'll explore over the next week. There's a surprising variety of terrain on and around the 6500 acre estancia, with rocky outcrops overlooking open rolling hills, woods and grassy valleys that lead to hidden waterfalls. Ride back to base as the sun sets for a delicious candle-lit dinner and opportunity to discuss plans for the rest of your stay. Night Los Potreros. (D)

**Day 2** Breakfast and your first morning ride heading across tussock-grass ('paja-brava') plains and climbing to the high points of the ranch where there are good chances to try your horse at all paces. Return to base for a leisurely lunch – perhaps a typical Argentine 'asado' (barbecue) prepared with great care and with several different cuts of home-reared meat to try. The afternoon to relax by the pool or take a leisurely walk, then watch the sun go down with an evening drink on the 'Patio Verde' or there might be time for an evening drive - or if the moonlight allows a ride - to a high point of the ranch to see the lights of the city of Cordoba in the distance. Night Los Potreros. (B,L,D)

## ITINERARY cont.

**Day 3** Breakfast before mounting up again to set off riding across country, passing the 'Canada de los Condores' (Canyon of the Condors) where condors are sometimes seen. A picnic lunch at the waterfall and chance to swim if the water is warm enough and sunbathe on the rocks. In the afternoon, ride back to the estancia by a different route for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)



**Day 4** Today you might head out with the gauchos for a taste of working estancia life, perhaps riding to where the much prized herd of pure Aberdeen Angus cattle graze, taking salt out, rounding up strays or helping move the herd into corrals for vaccinations or a head count - it's fascinating to see the gauchos' skilful horsemanship in their home environment and great fun attempting to help them. Head back to the Estancia for lunch, always made using the freshest ingredients, with home produced organic fruit, vegetables, eggs and home-made bread and pasta. In the afternoon, ride to the pretty Dominican church, listening out for the sound of the 'church bell stone' that inspired the bell-shaped cattle brand mark used on the farm. Then, as dusk approaches, help round up the yearlings, herding them into a corral for the night to protect them from the elusive puma. Dinner and night (B,L,D)



**Days 5 to 7** Three full days with a choice of morning, afternoon or picnic rides each day. There *may*, conditions allowing, be a chance to try your hand at polo with a little low key 'stick and ball' which is the perfect introduction to this addictive, fast moving game; you may be able to watch the Peruvian Paso stallion being put through his paces or try a lasso lesson with the gauchos - harder than it looks. Then challenge them at the "destrezas de gaucho" (gaucho games), racing for the 'sortija' and other competitions are great fun for all. There are also options for mountain biking, cooking lessons learning how to make traditional favourites such as empanadas, for town visits and activities such as paragliding or golf can be arranged locally (additional charge). There may also be a local 'rodeo' or another colourful fiesta, that will be well worth a visit. Three nights Los Potreros (B,L,D)

**Day 8** Breakfast and check-out by 10.00 then transfer to Cordoba airport for your onward flight. (B)



## DATES & RATES September 2024 to April 2025

**Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, rates are quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.**

**Stays at Los Potreros can be arranged on request year round (except in May, June, July when the Estancia is usually closed for repairs / improvements). The minimum stay is 3 nights (5 nights 15th December to 8th January).**

**Rates are charged per person per night.** Rates below are valid to April 2025 (NOTE these are non-resident rates which exclude tax; a copy of your passport is required to evidence eligibility):

3 to 6 night stay: USD 600 per person per night (twin share)

7 nights or more: USD 540 per person per night (twin share)

**Specials** - 20% discount on above rates for children aged 10 to 16 yrs (minimum age 10 yrs.)

Maximum capacity is 12 guests but the estancia can be booked exclusively **for 6 or more adults. Please ask for exclusive use rates.**



Nightly rates **INCLUDE** all riding out, guiding and equipment, other on-site activities (walking, farm drives, cooking lessons etc), twin accommodation (single travellers see below), meals, local drinks (wines, beer and spirits). Polo is **not** included but can sometimes be arranged on request during the Argentina polo season and for an additional charge Polo is always dependent on ground conditions (and polo the field is not watered).

Nightly rates **EXCLUDE** international flights to Cordoba and taxes, transfers from / to Cordoba airport, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, supplement for a single room (see below), polo sessions, any extra outings and off-site activities you may wish to arrange (golf, paragliding etc.) and any tips you wish to leave.

**Single rooms** - 2 bedrooms have been specifically allocated for single occupancy, so providing one of these rooms is available, there is no single supplement. Otherwise to guarantee a double room for single occupancy, a supplement of 30% of the nightly rate is charged.

## FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The closest airport to Estancia Los Potreros, and meeting point for these rides, is Cordoba Pajas Blancas Airport (COR). Most flights are via Buenos Aires (but flights via Sao Paolo in Brazil and Santiago in Chile are also possible). British Airways currently have daily flight departures to Buenos Aires, usually leaving London Heathrow at about 22.00 arriving Buenos Aires at about 09.00 the next day. Iberia and the Argentinean airline, Aerolineas Argentinas also have daily flights from London via Madrid to Buenos Aires. Iberia also and Latam to Santiago (both via Madrid). Other options are via the continent (eg Air France or Lufthansa) or via the USA.

Internal flights Buenos Aires to Cordoba are with Aerolineas Argentinas or Latam (there are several every day but note that only a few with Aerolineas depart from the International Ezeiza airport in Buenos Aires; most go from the domestic Jorge Newberry airport which is a transfer across town). Round trips fares London to Cordoba start at about £950, up to around £1300, per person economy return per person economy class return although this varies considerably depending on the date required, availability and how long in advance you book. Please call us for more flight information and / or if you would like a fare quote - we would be happy to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight sales is 6213).

## GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Argentina for less than 3 months, you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

**Health** No jabs are required as a condition of entry from the UK and Europe. The TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends that you ensure you are up to date Tetanus and Hepatitis A. Hepatitis B, Rabies and Typhoid may also be recommended in some circumstances. If you are not up to date with these you should visit your GP or a travel clinic about 4 weeks before departure.

(DRAFT 17/07/24)

