

Hidden Trails

Ph. 1-888-9-TRAILS

*Equestrian Vacations
- on & with Hidden Trails*

About Hidden Trails



Hidden Trails is owned and operated by nature enthusiasts who love horses and adventure activities. We have been involved with riding and other outdoor vacations for over 20 years.

With our partners Voyage du Cheval (France), Pegasus (Germany) as well as Equitour (Switzerland and France) we have collected the best riding destinations all over the world in some hidden places we would like to share with you.

These rides are about galloping on endless beaches, forging rivers, cantering through forests, trotting along age-old trails, gazing at beautiful vistas and encountering foreign cultures. But most of all, these trips are about getting away from the cycle of too much work and never enough free time.

Escape from the rituals, which long ago froze our nights and days into little more than routine and away from the worries of our new tense times. It is so satisfying when we take the plunge of adventure - it's unfortunate that we invent so many reasons to put aside living our dreams of adventure. It is sometimes a tangled web that we weave through life. Some of the threads reveal a work-a-day world of commitments, duties and obligations. Other threads are of a quiet fabric of hope, responsibility and refreshment.

On our adventures you see the real country, its back country and meet the locals. The love for horses has no boundaries but possesses a common language we all speak and understand. The majority of the overseas rides are from inn to inn, some from castle to castle and a few are camping rides.

You will experience new countries and their customs and make new friends. The Hidden Trails trips are the best you can find.

They have been tested by our staff or associates and received our stamp of approval. If you are considering a special riding vacation anywhere in the world, call us first and let our experienced consultants match the perfect trip with your dream.

We will listen to you and give you objective advice to help you choose the best destination and adventure.

Your vacation is the most precious time of the year and we are committed to making it the most memorable time of your life. Wherever you go, have a great time and bring back some peace of mind.

Thank you for your continued support.

Hidden Trails

Phone: 604-323-1141

Fax: 604-323-1148

Toll Free: 1-888-9-TRAILS

from within the USA or Canada or

E-mail: info@hiddentrails.com

Website: www.hiddentrails.com

Address:

659A Moberly Road, Vancouver BC Canada V5Z 4B3 or

4406 Tennyson Road, Wilmington, DE 19802 USA

Toll Free from the U.K.:

Ph: 0-808 189-0420

Fax: 0-808-280-1860

Toll Free Worldwide:

Skype: hiddentrails

Ancient Zagoria Pathways - Albania, Europe

Tour Code: IT-ALBCV01
8 days / 7 nights ~\$1,520.00
Dates: March to November

Trip Rating : ●●●●●
Difficulty : ●●●●●
Lodging : 🏠 BASIC

Tack: English Trekking
Horses: Albanian Local Breeds
Pace: Moderate with some trots and canters. ...
Walk, Trot, Canter,

Airport: Tirana International Airport
Nënë Tereza (TIA)



Introduction

Central, Albania

Travel back in time following the medieval Zagoria caravan pathways into a land of myths, tales, and ballads. Your ride will pass through ancient ruins of the Illyrian civilization, medieval villages, and many remote churches and monasteries. See the mountain bridges built during the period of Ali Pasha; they are a wonder to see with their rare and unique design. The culmination of this extraordinary trail will be the climb on Swallow's Rock.

You will soak in rural Albanian traditions by staying with local people and riding through vibrant, unspoiled natural landscapes.

The horses used on this ride are local breed mix of Tarpan and Arab horses. They are small but perfectly suited to the rocky terrain being surefooted and accustomed to trekking long mountainous routes, allowing riders to feel confident, relaxed, and free to enjoy the stunning views.

You will meet friendly locals and learn about their traditions while enjoying accommodation as guests in local homes. Your luggage will be transported by car with the most necessary things in saddle bags on your horse. The guides are professional and good company. The main objective of this ride is to celebrate the harmony between humankind, horses, nature, and culture.

Accommodation



Accommodations

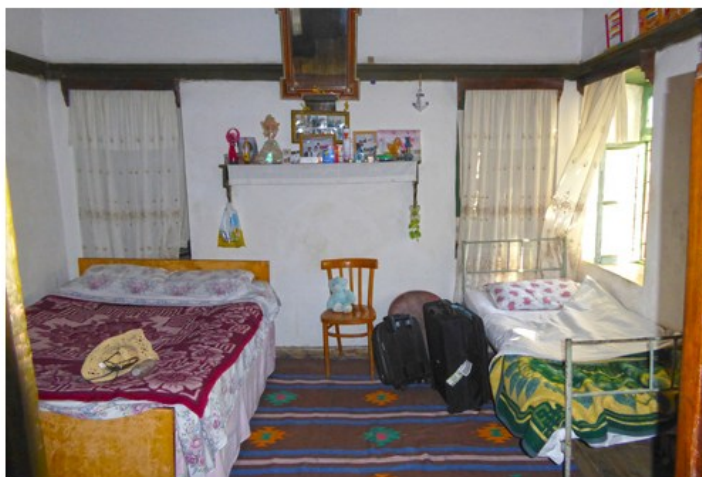
This is a progressive ride so nights are spent in different locations.

Description

We spend 5 nights in different village family houses & 2 nights (the first and the last) in a hotel in Gjirokastr.

Bathrooms are shared during the whole trip. Access to electricity is possible every evening and the whole area has a good phone coverage. Laundry can be done at various locations for a small fee.

Wi-Fi access is only available in Gjirokastr. Internet access is difficult during this ride so we recommend guests to buy an Albanian sim card (around 13 euros) to get free internet access and about 30 minutes of free calls. We have electricity and phone service available during the entire ride.





Accommodation Itinerary - subject to changes based on availability

- Night 1: Hotel in Gjirokaster
- Night 2: Family House in Karjan
- Nights 3 & 4: Family House in Ndëran
- Night 5: Family House in Polican
- Night 6: Family House in Libohovë
- Night 7: Hotel in Gjirokaster

Room Occupancy

Most nights include shared accommodations so the single supplement fee only applies for the first and last night, in Gjirokaster.



Meals

All meals are included except for lunch of the first day.

Dinner & breakfast are eaten at the hotel and family houses and lunches generally consist of a picnic, except for the first lunch at the hotel in Gjirokaster.

Breakfasts include eggs, butter, cheese, local pancakes, fruit jams, honey, milk and tea.

Lunch is a picnic that consist of bread, cheese, tomatoes, eggs, olive, pie fruit and a drink.

For dinner, we serve meat (chicken, calf or pork meat, fish by the sea), salads, cheese, local yogurt sauce, olives, pickles, vegetables from the garden, fruits and Raki and wine (included in the trip cost).

Dietary Restrictions

We can cater to most dietary restrictions with prior notice.



Riding





Riding Experience

This trip has been designed for intermediate riders who are reasonably fit and in a decent state of health. You should also be happy to share facilities with others and live in basic conditions.

Horses

The horses used for this ride are locally bred and ideal for the terrain. They are small but very robust and surefooted Albanian horses (between 13 and 14.2 hands). The Albanian horse, a unique mountain breed that is a local mixture of the archaic Tarpan and medieval Arab horse. They are great climber, have a clear mind and are surefooted. Our breeding program aims to help saving this declining breed of horses.

Our stable include 38 horses and is situated amidst scenic hills, green valleys, surrounded by high mountains. Our horses are trained with natural horsemanship techniques that we are pleased to share with the guests.

Pace

The rides are at a moderate pace overall. Most of the time we are traveling through mountains so that must be taken into account in regards to your expectations of speed, however there are indeed occasions where you can have a good canter. We ride for 6 days, for about 5-6 hours per day.

The total distance covered on this trip is about 130 km.

Guides

Kristina, Aurel and Ilir are all native from Albania and always happy to share their love for horses and their knowledge of Albania with guests.

If there are more than 4 riders, we will have two guides for this trip.

Itinerary



Sample Itinerary - subject to changes

Please note that this itinerary is given as guidance only and may be altered.

Day 1 (Saturday): Arrival

Plan your flight to arrive at Tirana airport ideally in the morning, but no later than 3:00 pm - this leaves time for the transfer and to be able to visit the town of Gjirokastra.

From the airport, the transfer will be by mini-van or off-road car and will take around 3-4 hours (250km). Settle into your hotel, 10 minutes walking from the centre of historical Gjirokastra. You can have a walk around the historical town of the old Bazaar: visit the Enver Hoxha's house, Gjirokastra castle, the church of the Old Bazaar, the mosque of the Bazar and Skenduli house representing an ideal sample of Gjirokastra traditional life.

Dinner will be served at a traditional restaurant. During dinner your guides will be able to speak to you about the trail: possible requests or needs, advice and things which are good to know. We recommend that you buy a map of the area before dinner in order to gain a good understanding of the itinerary.

Meals included: Dinner

Overnight at Hotel in Gjirokastra

Day 2 (Sunday): Ride to Karjan

After enjoying breakfast at the hotel, we will proceed to the next part of our adventure—a horseback ride through the picturesque countryside towards the charming medieval village of Karjan. This village embodies tradition and serves as a rural haven for passing caravans, boasting quaint churches and an ancient Roman bridge. As we traverse the rural landscape, we will encounter small houses, gardens, and witness traditional farming and cultivation practices. The journey unfolds amidst a backdrop of rolling hills, serene valleys, babbling water streams, and majestic cliffs. Along the way, we will be treated to breath-taking views of the River Drino, also known as the "Tree of Life" river, a significant water source deeply rooted in ancient pagan beliefs.

On route, we will encounter the remnants of the Santa Triada castle, which was reconstructed by Ali Pasha between 1809 and 1810. This strategically positioned castle once served as a control point for caravan routes and later found utility in military affairs during the socialist era. We will pause for a well-deserved lunch break in the scenic Shen Toder village. Afterward, we will continue our journey, riding for approximately 1.5 hours, until we finally arrive at the enchanting village of Karjan. Here, we will be warmly welcomed by a local family who will provide us with accommodation.

For dinner, we will have the opportunity to savor delectable dishes made from locally grown ingredients sourced from their own garden, accompanied by raki and wine, offering a true taste of the region. You are welcome to feed, clean, water, and brush the horses.

Riding 4-5 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Overnight at Family house in Karjan

Day 3 (Monday): Karjan to Nderan

After breakfast we will continue further north to the villages of Small Labova and the valley of Cajupi. We will follow the ancient merchant's cobble stone road of Zhapa with its mountain panorama, wide view of the hills and valleys. The first break will be in Small Labova, a village well known all over the south for its wonderful Church and the big houses belonging to the merchants which are now mostly ruined. Labova is the birthplace of Vangjel Zhapa, the organizer of the first Modern Olympic Games. Zhapa was a well-known businessman and philanthropist who lived around 200 years ago. After visiting the church a very unique mediaeval building you will start riding up the mountain. You will be impressed by the mountain's rare vegetation such as mountain tea, oregano, wild rose and other endemic plants like digitalis or 'Dig-Dag' as it's known locally. We follow the mountain path to the valley of Cajupi where we stop by a cattle of 1000 sheep to visit shepherds and spent lunch with them. You will have the



chance to taste the Brati famous spring water, a typical station of the old caravans with its small tower "karakoll". After a nice gallop through Cajupi valley, the trail will follow the medieval Caravan pathway with its famous bandit hideout 'Hija e Mallkuar' or 'The Cursed Shadow'. From here, medieval thieves could rob the caravans passing through Zagoria.

Depending on the condition of the road under construction in this segment, the guides may choose to take an alternative itinerary based on the situation. The new route may require mandatory walking on foot, on a sloped terrain, for up to 20 minutes.

The final destination of today will be the village of Nderan, placed in the heart of Zagoria region. This village will be our home for two nights.

Dinner will be a delicious mixture of local products, raki and wine. You can join the local life and accompany the family during the milking process, dinner preparation or have a look at the families, farming animals and garden. You are welcome to feed, clean, water, and brush the horses once again.

Riding 6 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Overnight at Family house in Nderan

Day 4 (Tuesday): Ride in the mountains

Wake up to the refreshing mountain air and savor a traditional breakfast of homemade bread, cookies, butter, jam, eggs, cheese, honey, and milk. Don't forget to enjoy a cup of mountain tea, a local specialty. Embark on a captivating horseback ride through Lliar, Hoshteva, Koncka, and Nivan villages, encountering diverse landscapes of cliffs, rivers, woods, and hills. Take in the scents of wildflowers, the presence of shepherds, and the charm of roaming animals. Follow an ancient horse pathway that connected major commercial centres in Southern Albania, passing by the impressive Rock of Zhej. Pause at the reconstructed Lliar water spring, commissioned by Ali Pasha. Experience a thrilling downhill ride to the ruins of a medieval stone bridge (now collapsed) and perhaps take a summer swim. Explore the unique church of Hoshteva, adorned with pagan-inspired wall paintings, and pass by the Byzantine church of Lliar and the 1702-built Nivan Saint Mehili monastery. Cross the medieval bridge to reach Nderan village, a historical centre of medieval livestock fairs, where you'll spend the night in the welcoming embrace of a local family. You are welcome to feed, clean, water, and brush the horses. (Depending on the road situation, an alternative route may also be taken during the day. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.)

Riding 5-6 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Overnight at Family house in Nderan

Day 5 (Wednesday): Nderan to Polican

Prepare for an exhilarating morning as we embark on an unforgettable equestrian adventure. Following a delightful country breakfast, we will journey through a picturesque mountain valley, perfect for invigorating gallops. Along the way, we'll pass by secluded farms, majestic cliffs, and hidden historical trails, veering away from the typical tourist paths. This route through the captivating Pogoni region offers a true journey through time, where ancient ruins and mythical natural wonders await our discovery.

Our midday picnic will be enjoyed near the renowned stone bridge of Hilomo or Kacarello's, a remarkable architectural gem from the merchant era. This isolated marvel can only be reached by horse, adding to its mystique and allure.

After a thrilling ride, we will arrive at the heart of the Pogoni region, the charming mountain village of Polican, predominantly inhabited by a Greek minority. You will have the opportunity to spend the night with a Greek minority family, immersing yourself in their rich cultural heritage. In their company, you can explore fascinating medieval cult monuments that hold a special place in the village's history.

As evening descends, prepare to indulge in the gastronomic delights of the region. Polican is renowned for being one of the foremost producers of mountain honey in South Albania. Here, you will have the pleasure of savouring an array of honey flavours, with nearly ten different varieties available throughout the seasons, each capturing the essence of the local bee pastures. You are welcome to feed, clean, water, and brush the horses once again.

This day promises an exciting blend of adventure, cultural exploration, and culinary delights, as we delve into the hidden treasures of the Pogoni region.

Riding approx. 4-5 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Overnight at Family house in Polican

Day 6 (Thursday): Polican to Libohova

Today, we bid farewell to the Greek minority as we set our sights on the town of Libohova. The journey ahead will take us through challenging yet breath-taking mountain landscapes, culminating in a grand finale at Swallow Rock, perched 500 meters above the glistening Suha River. Depending on the weather, our chosen picnic spot will either be alongside the Suha River, allowing for a refreshing swim (depending on the season & weather conditions), or at the historic Church of Labova of the Cross. In both instances, we will have the opportunity to explore this extraordinary monument, the oldest church in Albania, constructed by Justinian the Great in 554. It holds great significance as the site where Justinian married his wife, Teodora, with the villagers preserving her wedding dress for generations. Adorned with a captivating wooden iconostasis adorned with floral and symbolic animal scenes, the church exudes a timeless charm. We will pause for lunch at a delightful local restaurant known for its exceptional regional cuisine.

In the afternoon, our journey continues to Libohova, a charming town nestled at the base of the majestic Bureto Mountain. Archaeological evidence indicates its ancient roots, but it flourished in the 17th century, evolving into a bustling commercial hub. During the afternoon, you may opt to take a leisurely stroll, approximately one hour in duration, to visit the historic Libohova Castle, an esteemed Bektashi spiritual site, and the tomb of Shanisha, sister of Ali Pasha.

For the night, you will be warmly welcomed into a local family's home in Libohova, where you will have the pleasure of savouring delicious local cuisine. Immerse yourself in the farm life by engaging in activities such as assisting with chores, cooking, feeding the horses, or even enjoying local music. It's a chance to truly experience the local way of life and forge unforgettable memories.

Riding 5 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Overnight at Family house in Libohova

Day 7 (Friday): Libohova to Stables

Today's ride will be relatively short but filled with captivating scenery. We'll begin our morning by traversing rolling hills, passing through the picturesque Drino's Valley, and crossing a few charming water streams. As we ascend a steep hill, we will enter the magnificent Antigonea National Park, where we will pause for a visit. This ancient site, constructed by King Pyrrhus in 295 BC, holds the name of his first wife, Antigona, who was the daughter of King Ptolemais of Egypt. Take your time to explore the rich historical significance of this remarkable place before we continue our journey.

After our visit, we will ride for an additional hour until we reach the stable, where you will have the unique opportunity to experience the joy of releasing your horses and witnessing their freedom. Following this exhilarating experience, a delightful picnic lunch, prepared by a family, awaits us in the village of "Asim Zeneli," just a short five-minute drive from the stable.

Once we have satisfied our appetites, we will return to the same hotel in Gjirokastra for accommodation. The entire afternoon will be at your leisure, providing time to make preparations for your departure, explore local museums, or indulge in some souvenir shopping. As the day draws to a close, we will gather for a memorable farewell dinner at a cosy restaurant in the old Bazaar, savouring the last tastes of the local cuisine. Later in the evening, you may choose to have a drink at a popular bar.

Riding 3-4 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Overnight at Hotel in Gjirokastra

Day 8 (Saturday): Departure

After breakfast at the hotel you will be transferred back to the airport of Tirana.

Meals included: Breakfast



Other Info

Meeting: Gjirokastrer

Airport: Tirana International Airport Nënë Tereza (TIA)

Transfer: Tirana International Airport Nënë Tereza (TIA) or Saranda Port.

Distance: 220 km / 136.7 miles

Pick-up/ drop-off for this trip is from Tirana International Airport Nënë Tereza (TIA). Scheduled transfers every Saturday at 12:30 pm and 14:30 pm Recommended arrival time for flights: No later than 14:30 pm Recommended departure time for flights: Not earlier than 1:00 pm On the last day, we will drop you off at the airport between 9:00am and 12:00pm (noon), so please do not book your departure flights for before 1:00pm!

Tack: English Trekking

Horses: Albanian Local Breeds

Pace: Moderate with some trots and canters. 5 to 6 hrs a day (approx. 130km total)

Walk | Trot | Canter |

Level: 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾 (3 to 3 out of 5) Intermediate

Age: Min 14

Weight: 200 lbs / 90 kg

Riders: Min 2 riders

Max 12 riders

Riding helmets are mandatory for this ride.

Rates and Dates 2026 - IT-ALBCV01

Rates include: Accommodations, All meals, Water and drinks with meals, 6 riding days, English speaking guide (second guide if more than 4 pax) & Luggage transportation

Packages and Options

Season	Description	EUR	~US\$
A 2026	8 day tour	€1380	\$1520

The US Dollar Rate is based on a EUR Exchange Rate of 1.1 and subject to currency fluctuation

Rates Note: Please, provide your passport information at time of booking

Transfer Option

Description

2026 Single rooms (available only during the first and last night - subject to availability) price per night pp	€30 \$35
2026 Small group supplement (2 pax only), pp	€180 \$200
2026 Transfer between Saranda port and Gjirokastra (plan to fly to Corfu and then take the boat to Saranda), pp, round trip	€125 \$140
2026 Transfer from/to Tirana Airport (3+ pax), one way, per person	€55 \$60
2026 Private transfer from/to Tirana Airport (2 pax only), one way, per person	€90 \$100
2026 Private transfer from/to Tirana Airport (1 pax only), one way, per person	€175 \$190

Tour Dates

Season	Tour Dates		
A 2026	04/11/2026 - 04/18/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	05/09/2026 - 05/16/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	05/23/2026 - 05/30/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	06/06/2026 - 06/13/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	06/20/2026 - 06/27/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	07/04/2026 - 07/11/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	08/08/2026 - 08/15/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	08/22/2026 - 08/29/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	09/05/2026 - 09/12/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	09/19/2026 - 09/26/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	10/24/2026 - 10/31/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	10/31/2026 - 11/07/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	11/07/2026 - 11/14/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	11/14/2026 - 11/21/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	11/21/2026 - 11/28/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour
A 2026	11/28/2026 - 12/05/2026	8d / 7n	8 day tour

Min/Max: 2/12

Rates do not include: Entrance tickets for museums and parks, Extra drinks, Airport Transfers & Gratuities

Reservation Form

Tour : _____ **Code #:** _____ **from:** _____ **to :** _____

The Travelers (Last Name, First Name)	Male Female	Single room / or tent	Birth Date MM/DD/YY	Height	Weight	Special diets												
						Special diets	Beginner	Novice	Intermediate	Strong Intern.	Advanced	ride English	ride Western	mostly arena	mostly hacking			
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special Diets: _____

Your fitness level: Excellent Moderate Poor How long have you been riding? _____

How often do you ride? _____ Have you been on other riding tours? No Yes last trip when? _____

If Hidden Trails offers a transfer from the local airport/station: I would like the transfer to be included: YES NO

In an emergency, name and phone number of contact: _____

Attention: Please, if there is more than one participant, all have to sign the reservation form - make copies if needed

With my signature I confirm my reservation of the listed program(s) under the Hidden Trails Booking Conditions. I'm aware, and I made all participants aware of the risk involved with these outdoor adventure activities. All participants have read and agree with the [Hidden Trails Booking Conditions](#) and the [Hidden Trails Recreational Activity Release and Indemnity Agreement](#) in this brochure or as listed on the Internet.

I (we) will sign and forward the [Recreational Activity Release and Indemnity Agreement](#) at least 10 weeks before trip starting date.

Last Name and First Name (The Traveler) _____

Street _____ e-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Phone (wk) _____ (hm) _____ Cell _____ Fax _____

Date _____ Signature (mandatory) 1. _____

Please, charge a 25% deposit (minimum \$ 350 per person) now and full payment 10 weeks before the travel date to my credit card.

For payments by VISA or Mastercard (no debit cards)

Cardholder: _____

Card # _____ 3 digit Security # _____

Exp.Date: _____ Signature _____

Billing Address for Credit Card (if different than mailing address):

I have enclosed a check for the deposit

Additional Signatures:

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Travel Cancellation Insurance Credit Card required

Sign me (us) up initial _____

No, we will provide our own initial _____

Hidden Trails

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Mo-Fr 8:30 am to 6 pm
Pacific Standard Time

