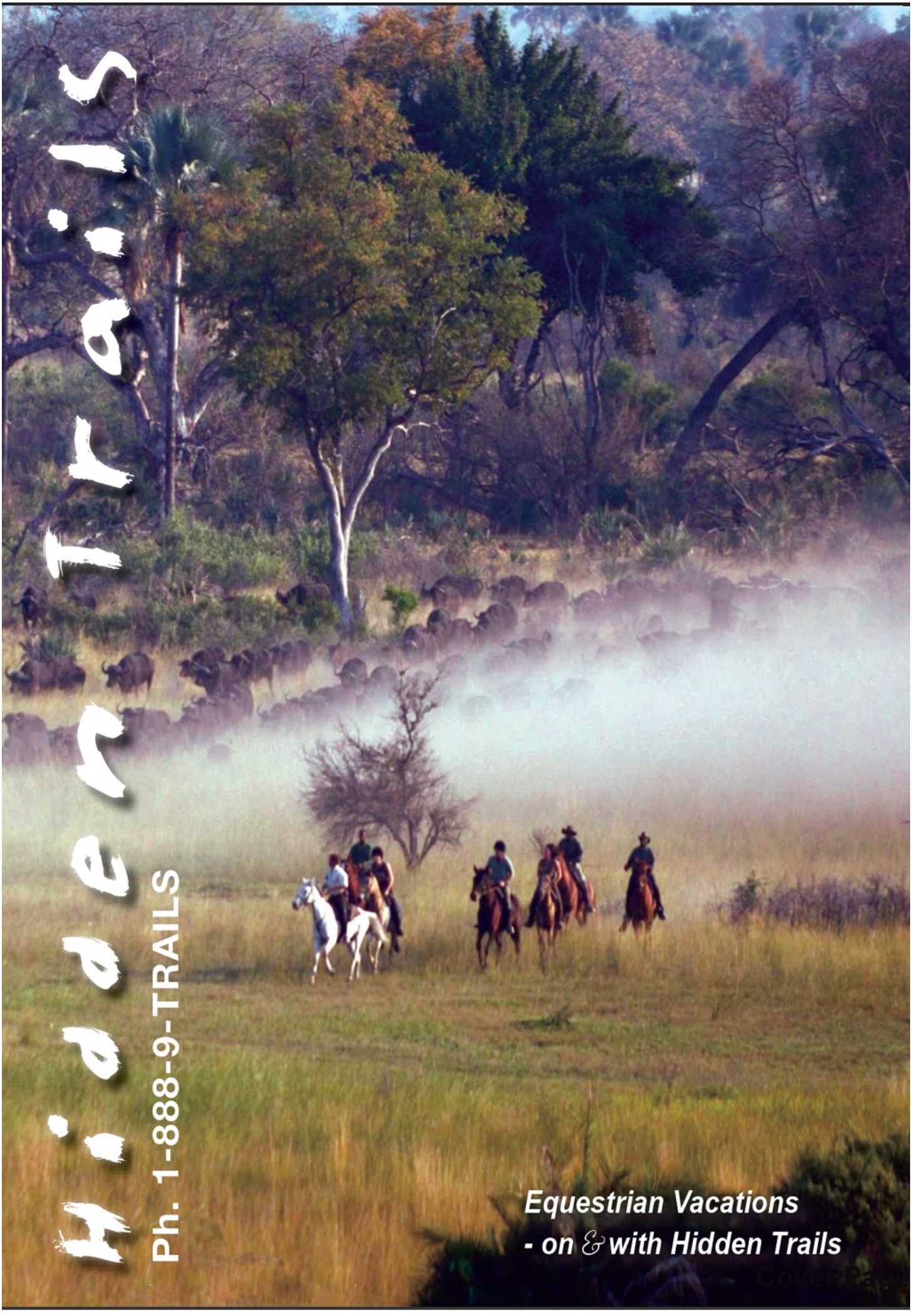

Hidden Trails
Ph. 1-888-9-TRAILS
Equestrian Vacations
- on & with Hidden Trails

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
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Fax: 0-808-280-1860

Toll Free Worldwide:
Skype: hiddentrails

High Sierras Wilderness Pack Trips - USA, North America

Tour Code: RTCA10
7 days / 6 nights ~$0.00
Dates: Jul-Sept

Trip Rating :
Difficulty :
Lodging: BASIC

Tack: Western
Horses: Mostly quarterhorse mix
Pace: between 2 to 6 hours per day - mostly ...
Walk,

Airport: Mammoth Yosemite Airport (MMH)













Introduction

California, USA
Take a week, pack up, and really get away from it all. Join us on a week-long pack trip into the Eastern High Sierras of California. On horseback we will explore regions of the Sierras like the John Muir Wilderness, the Ansel Adams Wilderness or Mount Whitney. Explore, relax, fish a bit, talk about nothing or everything around the campfire - just be you for a while.

Our riding excursions will explore the vast areas of the John Muir Wilderness throughout the summer. This is a land of snow-capped mountains with hundreds of lakes and streams and beautiful meadows. Elevations range from 4,000 to 14,496 ft. Lower elevations slopes are covered with stands of Jeffrey Pine, incense cedar, white and red fir and lodgepole pine. The higher elevations are barren granite with many glacially carved lakes.

Other rides will be in the Mount Whitney area. Mt. Whitney is the highest peak in the lower 48 states. The peak lies within the John Muir Wilderness and the Sequoia National Park Wilderness. These areas were set aside by Congress and the President to provide opportunities for solitude and unconfined, primitive types of recreation. Wilderness areas are places where the earth and its communities of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

Or chose to explore the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Ansel Adams is characterized by spectacular alpine scenery with barren granite peaks, steep-walled gorges and rock outcroppings. Elevations range from 3,500 feet to 13,157 feet and there are several small glaciers on the north and northeast facing slopes of the highest peaks. The Ansel Adams Wilderness contains the headwaters of the North and Middle Forks of the San Joaquin River.

Accomodation

Accommodation
These are pack trips and all nights are spent camping (camp locations vary depending on the program chosen).

Description
We have a wide variety of tents available (single, double, or family), so please let us know what type you prefer. There is a solar shower and privy with toilet seat and tent at the campsites. There is no generator on our trips -- no electrical source is available.
We do not provide ground mats or sleeping bags, so you must bring your own!



Meals
All meals are included from breakfast on Day 1 to breakfast on the last day.

Food is typically sourced from local establishments. We strive to provide a deluxe dining experience and tailor our menus to reflect the tastes of our guests. We prepare breakfast and dinner.

A hot breakfast is prepared fresh each morning. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and salads are available at lunch and dinner each day.
Lunch is a build-your-own affair, typically completed before breakfast is served. Sandwich makings, fruits, and snacks are available for you to create your own take-along meal.
Each dinner has a different entrée (beef, chicken, pork, etc).

Alcohol is not included in this trip, but guests are free to bring their own.

Dietary Restrictions
We can cater to vegetarians with prior notice.

Riding














Pace
Riding experience is considered when fitting you for a mount. There are plenty of horses and mules to choose from to fit your expertise. All trips go at a walk. Our crew will help you get comfortable before we leave the pack station. We ride as few as 2 hours or as many as 6 hours in a day.

Horses
Approximately 130 horses and mules are the backbone of the operation. Pack mules carry the provisions for trail riders, hikers, and those wishing to have their gear packed to a wilderness campsite. Mules typically carry 150-240 pounds of equipment, food and dunnage and work from June through September. During the off season, livestock graze fields in the Owens Valley.
Horses and mules come to the pack station as four to five year old green broke. After a couple of years of training they spend up to another twenty to twenty-five years working in the Sierra.

Tack
You are encouraged to bring your own saddle if you have one. However, if your tack doesn't fit our stock, or we deem is unsafe, you will not be able to use it.

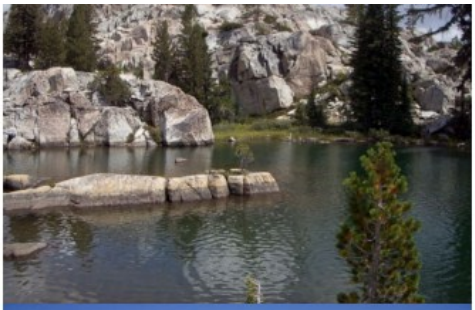
Guides
Each year young men and women bring youth and enthusiasm to a crew of senior packers and cooks. Most of the crew come from ranch backgrounds and once they start packing with us, they have a hard time ever leaving. Every member of the crew carries on the traditions of the talented men and women who started the business in the 1940s. New employees learn the trails, traditions, and develop skills to serve another generation of guests. Only the most able, hard working and those with exceptional people skills succeed as staff.

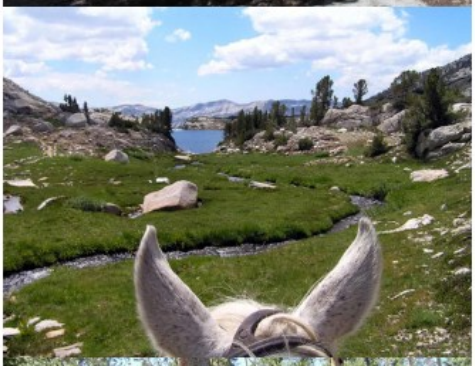


Itinerary



Each of the different departure dates will have their own specific itinerary, but all of them will follow the below guidelines:
- Your arrival and meeting at the Pack Station will be for 7:00am of Day 1 and most rides start at 7:30am. On the last day of the trip, a van then meets us to take us back to the pack station where we started from - Generally we arrive back at the pack station around for 4:30pm to 6:00pm.
- On the longer itinerary there are layover days where you can ride and explore the area from camp since we are not moving camp locations. Most of our camps also have opportunities for fishing during the day.
- Because the trip starts in the early morning, we highly recommend you make arrangements for an extra overnight in a local hotel the night before to experience minimum stress when finding the pack station and






arriving on time.

7 day trip, AP Lake of the Lone Indian from Rock Creek - Click here for full itinerary
This seven-day trail ride goes through the most remote areas of Fish Creek and Mono Creek backcountry. Trip itinerary includes Mono Pass, Silver Pass and Jackson Meadow. Several layover days allow riders to further explore the surrounding lakes and meadows, Peter Pande, Wilbur May, Grassy, and Olive lakes.

5 day trip, AP Mono Creek Trail - Click here for full itinerary
Start and end at Rock Creek. The fantastic fishing and beauty of Indian Summer make this time a favorite for the oldtimers. We'll set up a camp near the confluence of Hopkins Creek and explore Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin and the Recesses.

7 day trip, AP Northern Yosemite - Click here for full itinerary
Ride north on the Pacific Crest Trail to visit the treasures of the Yosemite Wilderness. McCabe Lakes, Matterhorn Canyon, Smedberg Lake, Benson Lake and Kerrick Canyon are highlights of this journey.
This pack trip has a lot of ups and downs over some slick rocks.

7 day tip, AP Kern River & Golden Trout- Click here for full itinerary
This seven-day pack trip provides a unique opportunity for both novice and experienced anglers to enjoy some of the best fly fishing the High Sierra has to offer. Guests travel by horseback into remote areas of the Golden Trout Wilderness and Sequoia National Park to fish for isolated species of Golden Trout and Kern River Rainbows. The waters of the Kern Plateau hold the purest strains of Golden Trout in the world, a fish so unique and colorful, that it has been named the official state fish of California. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife rescued 52 Golden trout on September 19, 2016. They were aided by some of our trusty mules and wranglers. Here's the video.
Equally impressive, the waters of the nearby Kern River are home to the Kern River Rainbow, a close relative of the Golden Trout and one of the most sought-after fish in California.
Guests spend two full layover days fishing for Kern River Rainbows from a beautiful camp situated near the banks of the world class fishery. Along the journey to and from the Kern River there is the opportunity to fish the Golden Trout's native waters, Golden Trout Creek and Volcano Creek from our camp at Little Whitney Meadow.

6 Day Trip, AP Mt. Whitney Trail Ride- Click here for full itinerary
Pack your tackle for the ultimate Golden trout fishing adventure. Experience the subalpine beauty of Sequoia National Park with camps at Tyndal Creek, Wallace Creek, Crabtree Meadows and Rock Creek.

6 day trip, AP Triple Pass
Experience the beauty of countless streams, lakes and meadows carpeted with wildflowers. Route covers a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail and crosses Mono, Silver and Duck Passes. Opportunity for trout fishing - mornings, evenings and two layover days. Side trips planned to Hopkins Lake and Grassy Lake.

6 day trip, AP Fish Creek Trail Ride - Click here for full itinerary
The fantastic fishing and beauty of Indian Summer make this time a favorite for the oldtimers. This trail ride goes through the most remote areas of Fish Creek and Mono Creek backcountry. Trip itinerary includes Mono Pass, Silver Pass and Jackson Meadow. Layover days allow riders to further explore the surrounding lakes and meadows — Peter Pande, Wilbur May, Grassy, and Olive lakes.

6 day trip, AP Silver Pass - Click here for full itinerary
The ideal trip for those that like to see new back country. Spectacular trail riding as we cross Mono and Silver passes to reach Cascade Valley. Enjoy the camaraderie of those who enjoy a good trail ride and beautiful scenery.

10 day trip, AP Evolution Valley Trail Ride - Click here for full itinerary
When you ask Sierra backcountry adventurers which areas are their favorite, Evolution Basin, Le Conte Canyon, and Dusy Basin are always on the list. This trip combines all of these incredibly scenic regions into one trip. Stunning glacial-cut mountains, beautiful lakes, and tumbling rivers all contribute to one of the best trips in the Sierra.

6 day trip, AP Virginia Lakes to Tuolumne Meadows - Click here for full itinerary
Experience a section of Yosemite National Park that few visitors see. Virginia Lakes to Tuolumne Meadows.

5 day trip, AP History of the Sierra - Click here for full itinerary
Immerse yourself in the Natural History of the Sierra Nevada.
Join Fulbright Scholar and retired National Park Ranger Dr. Nancy Muleady-Mecham for a once in a lifetime chance to learn all about these mountains and the nature within them. We will explore the night sky in the truly dark skies of the backcountry. We'll learn about animal adaptations, birds and mammals; Sierra geology, glaciation, and weather; dendrochronology (the science of tree-ring dating), the mixed conifer and alpine forests, wildflowers, fire ecology; and indigenous people through time. You will learn to make arrowheads and to use an atlatl (ancient spear-thrower). Bring binoculars, cameras and your sense of wonder.

6 day trip, AP Kern Peak Trail - Click here for full itinerary
Explore the Golden Trout Wilderness with a loop heading over Trail Pass into the meadows and stringers of the Kern Plateau. This is a secluded wilderness area with vast meadows and trails to explore. We make a loop with camps at Little Whitney and Big Whitney Meadows crossing both Barringer and Cottonwood Passes. Trails are good. A great trip for those that enjoy riding and seeing lots of new country every day.

6 day trip, AP Winchester Trail - Click here for full itinerary
We camp near creeks that comprise the native habitat of the golden trout, providing ample opportunity for anglers to catch these beautiful fish.

5 day trip, AP Mt Langley Trail - Click here for full itinerary
Layover days provide ample opportunity for anglers to catch golden trout, or explore the beautiful meadows filled with wildflowers.



















Note: This tour is operating under permit with the USDA Forest Service through Special Use Permit on the Inyo National Forest.

Other Info

Meeting: Pack Station/ Bridgeport
Airport: Mammoth Yosemite Airport (MMH)
Train station: --
Transfer: --
Best to rent a car and drive. Most trips require you meet at the pack station for 7:00am.

Tack: Western
Horses: Mostly quarterhorse mix
Pace: between 2 to 6 hours per day - mostly at a walk
Walk |
Level: (2 to 2 out of 5) Novice
Age: Min 6
Weight: 240 lbs
Riders: Min 2 riders Max 12 riders

Detailed Itineraries



Please note that these represents the planned itineraries. Weather or other factors may affect the choice of campsites and daily travel. All decisions are made by the Head Packer with attention to the safety and comfort of guests and stock.

Sample Itinerary: Evolution Valley Trail Ride

Day 1: Rock Creek Pack Station to Mono Creek
Arrive at Rock Creek Pack Station by 7:00 AM where your gear will be weighed, and you will be served breakfast. Your personal vehicles will be left in the pack station parking area. The pack station will have a pre-packed lunch for you.
Leaving Rock Creek Pack Station, our route follows the Mono Pass Trail which ascends Mt. Starr to 12,045' Mono Pass. During the first part of this section one has a panoramic view of Little Lakes Valley, an area with more than twenty lakes framed by towering mountains. The final rocky ascent achieves the barren landscape of Mono Pass, five miles into the ride. The route starts an easy descent past Summit Lake to views of Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin and the northern Sierra range. The trail switchbacks down past Trail Lakes to Golden Creek where we enter the heavier timber and headwaters of Mono Creek. Passing the junction to Pioneer Basin, the trail reaches the bottom of the canyon. We will cross streams cascading into Mono Creek, ride below majestic Mono Rock, and pass through a series of meadows to our camp near the creek. This area was once the center of the Native American summer trading camps.
Riding apprx. 11 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Mono Creek

Day 2: Mono Creek to Quail Meadows
Our route continues to follow Mono Creek west as it cascades down to through several life zones with groves of lodgepole pine giving way to Jeffrey and juniper pine forest and, finally, aspen thickets. Lush meadows nourished by lateral streams break up the forest ride with the naked granite walls of the glacial cut valley rising almost 2,000' above the valley floor. Our five-mile descent along the creek is blocked by a rocky knoll, requiring us to switchback up to the junction with the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail (JMT). Our path follows the JMT south, following the North Fork over a mile before turning right at the bridge to follow the Lake Edison Trail ½ mile to Quail Meadows.
Riding approx. 8 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Quails Meadow

Day 3: Quail Meadows to Bear Creek
We return to the JMT, crossing the bridge to the south side of Mono Creek. The trail follows the creek briefly before starting a long series of switchbacks up the shaded north side of Bear Ridge, gaining 2,000' over the next three










miles. The trail levels out briefly and then begins a descent dropping 1,000' over two miles to the Bear Creek drainage with superb mountain views to the right. Over the next hour, our route to camp follows Bear Creek as at alternates between cascades and pools through forest and meadows.
Riding approx. 9 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Bear Creek

Day 4: Layover
You could use this layover day as a rest day, but Bear Creek abounds with excellent options for day excursions.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Bear Creek

Day 5: Bear Creek to South Fork of the San Joaquin River
We continue to follow the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail south, rising above tree line to ride along the shore of beautiful Marie Lake before easily climbing to 10,860' Seldon Pass. The views from the pass, both north and south, warrant a stop to take in the majesty of the Sierra. Remounting, the trail begins a long descent past Heart Lake and between the Sallie Keyes Lakes before reinterring the trees. Some six miles and 2,200' below the pass, you will follow the cutoff trail for the Muir Trail Ranch and then turn left at the junction with the Florence Lake Trail to our camp on the San Joaquin River. Remember that junction, because there is a hot spring near the other side of the river.
Riding approx. 11 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near San Joaquin River

Day 6: San Joaquin to Evolution Valley
Our day begins with an easy ride along the San Joaquin River, reconnecting with the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail in ½ hour. The trail crosses the bridge over Piute Creek to enter Kings Canyon National Park and soon follows the edge of the rushing river before crossing another bridge to the deep forest at the head of Goddard Canyon. We cross yet another bridge to start the 800' climb along Evolution Creek to Evolution Valley. A beautiful cascade is the reward near the top. Our route continues into the valley to our camp, alternating between forest and large meadows with the creek meandering through the grass.
Riding approx. 11 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Evolution Valley

Day 7: Layover
The meadows of Evolution Valley are expansive. This is a great day to fish the river, wash out some clothes, read a good book, or follow the unmarked trail from Colby Meadow toward McGee Lakes.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Evolution Valley

Day 8: Evolution Valley to Little Pete Meadow
Our route continues the gentle wander through the meadows of Evolution Valley before climbing 950' on forested switchbacks to Evolution Lake. The view of the lake and surrounding mountains is simply spectacular and deserves a stop to take in the majesty of the Sierra. The trail follows the east shore of Evolution Lake and then climbs steadily past a series of lakes, gaining 1,300' in 6.5 miles to the 11,955' Muir Pass. The terrain is open and rocky, encircled by the towering peaks. Austere, tremendous, stark, primeval, all apply to this pass and the barren surrounding peaks. Leaving the pass, the trail drops down through equally stark terrain past Helen Lake and more unnamed lakes. The flora will slowly return, first as alpine vegetation, then stunted trees, and finally, at the lower lake, forest. In all, we drop more than 3,000' over six miles to our camp at the edge of Little Pete Meadow.
Riding approx. 18 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Little Pete Meadows

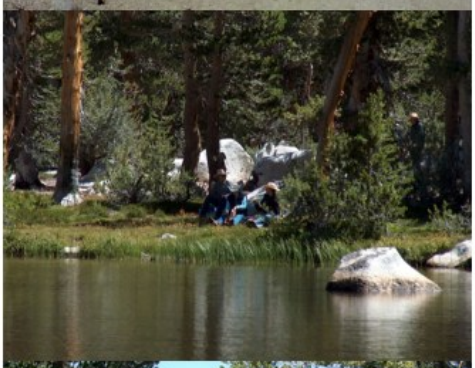
Day 9: Layover Day
This is a comfortable camp at the edge of the Middle Fork of the Kings River. There is good fishing, bathing pools, and beautiful views. While this is a great camp to rest after the long trip over Muir Pass, a trip down canyon toward Grouse Meadow is available for those interested in exploring this picturesque canyon.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camping near Little Pete Meadows

Day 10: Little Pete Meadow Over Bishop Pass
This is the way to finish a trip through the Sierra. The John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail follows the Middle Fork of the Kings River for ½ hour to the Le Conte ranger station and the junction of the Bishop Pass Trail. We leave the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trail and switchback up first through forest and then rocky meadows with wonderful views across Le Conte Canyon. The trail climbs steadily to gain 2,000' in three miles before arriving at the meadows surrounding the lakes of lower Dusy Basin. Our route continues to climb another 1,200' past lakes, rocky slopes, and alpine meadows surrounded by the magnificent peaks of Dusy Basin to 11,972' Bishop Pass. The trail drops down 2,100' from Bishop Pass through a series of meadows and along a chain of beautiful lakes to reach the trailhead near the north end of South Lake. We will continue along the trail to the waiting trucks below Parchers Resort.
Riding approx. 16 miles
Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Mono Creek Trail from Rock Creek - *subject to changes*

Day 1: Rock Creek to Mono Creek
Leaving the Pack Station (10,000 ft.), our route follows the Mono Pass Trail which ascends Mt. Starr to Mono Pass (12,000 ft.). During the first part of this section one has a panoramic view of Little Lakes Valley, an area with more than twenty lakes framed by towering mountains including Mt. Morgan (13,748 ft), Bear Creek Spire (13,705 ft), Mt. Dade and Mt. Abbott. During this climb to Mono Pass, the trail goes through meadows with scattered limber pine and wild flowers, crosses a few small creeks and then climbs above timberline. At all times there is an unrestricted view of the overwhelming landscape.
After crossing the pass, the route starts an easy descent going by Summit Lake; immediately afterwards, Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin and the northern Sierra range comes into view. The trail proceeds down past Trail Lake to Gold Creek where we enter the heavier timber and headwaters of Mono Creek alongside which we travel through a long valley with green meadows, wild flowers, stretches of lodge-pole pine, continually broken by small feeder creeks coming from tributary watersheds. Imposing Mono Rock towers over the valley as we head down Mono Creek.
We make camp near the confluence of one of the many streams cascading into Mono Creek. Majestic Mono Rock towers over the canyon to the south. There are a series of meadows and camping areas from Fourth Recess to Hopkins Meadow. This area was once the center of the Native American summer trading camps.
Riding approx. 5 to 5.5 hours (about 10 miles)
Meals included: Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Mono Creek






Day 2 to 4: Different Rides from Camp:
Great areas to explore from a central camp alongside of Mono Creek. Side trips available to Third Recess Lake, Fourth Recess Lake, Hopkins Basin and Pioneer Basin.
Exploring Hopkins Basin to Lower Hopkins Creek, which is a climb, is a 1 hour ride from the confluence of Mono Creek and Third Recess Creek. Once at the meadow, there is a trail that climbs straight up to Lower Hopkins Lake (about a 20-minute ride). Lower Hopkins Lake is the most beautiful lake in the Sierra – if sets on a high shelf, you would never know it's there unless you have been there before. To make a circle route, continue up the inlet stream and drop over a small hill to Hopkins Creek. The green meadows, winding crystal blue creek winding through the meadow and the red talus slopes of Red Slate Mountain make Hopkins Pass one of the most colorful vista points of the trip. The views looking south over the Recesses are awesome. Carpets of shooting stars, buttercups and yellow flowers alternate with the lush meadows dotted by gushing springs.
Third Recess Lake is a forty-minute hike or ride. This canyon opens up south of camp and provides a remote basin to explore.
Fourth Recess Lake is a thirty-minute trek up Mono Creek and Fourth Recess Creek. This is an easy hike for those not wanting to spend much time on the trail.
Pioneer Basin is a one hour ride to Mud Lake (Pioneer Lake #1). This wide-open basin has six lakes with Golden, Rainbow and Brook trout. An ideal day trip is to follow the streams and meadows to Lake #4, cross country over to Lake #5 and circle the basin following the shores of Lake #3, #2A and Lake #2. This sub-alpine region represents the finest in high mountain meadows, flowers and panoramic views of the Sierra.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Mono Creek

Day 5: Mono Creek to Rock Creek Pack Station
The ride up Gold Creek and back to Mono Pass seems easier on the way home. Lunch at Trail Lake. The views of Abbott, Dade, Mills and Bear Creek Spire frame the view as we crest Mono Pass and turn the corner to view the countless lakes in Upper Rock Creek. The views of Wheeler Ridge, Rock Creek Lake and Boundry Peak are in view as the trail winds its way alongside the westside of the canyon.
Riding approx. 5 hours
Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Virginia Lakes - *subject to changes*

Arrive at Virginia Lakes Pack Outfit by 7:00 AM where your gear will be weighed and you will be served breakfast. Your personal vehicles will be left in the pack station parking area.
Begin at Virginia Lakes; Ending at Tuolumne Meadows.
You will be ferried the one mile from the pack station to the trailhead. A pack station driver will pick you up at the Tuolumne Meadows Stable parking area located west of Lembert Dome, returning you to the Virginia Lakes Pack Outfit station.
Experience a section of Yosemite National Park that few visitors see. You will enter Yosemite from the east side of the Sierra, at Virginia Lakes, to cross the Sierra Crest into Yosemite National Park. Your path will lead you past expansive views, powerful waterfalls, cascading creeks, dense pine forests, and lush meadows as you travel through the granite peaks and glacial valleys of northern Yosemite.
Layover days allow day trips to Miller Lake, McCabe Lakes, and Waterwheel Falls.
The trip moves through subalpine forest and the alpine zone. Expect to see western white pine, mountain hemlock, and lodgepole pine with many subalpine meadows that flower from July through August. The alpine zone of Yosemite begins near the 9,500-foot elevation. No trees grow in this zone due to the short, cool summers with long, cold, and snowy winters that are typical at these elevations. Many exposed granitic outcroppings, talus slopes, and boulder fields limit the amount of vegetation that grows here.

Day 1: Virginia Lakes to Virginia Canyon
9.2 miles, 1,550' gain, 2,650' loss
The trail follows the north side of Blue Lake and then climbs fairly steeply in open forest to Cooney Lake in the first mile. The trail climbs 750' past the Frog Lakes on shale slopes to a saddle at mile 2.6. The rocky path descends steeply to the Green Lake Trail junction at mile four. Turn left at the junction toward Summit Lake and climb 170' in 0.4 miles to the lake. The trail drops steeply as it enters Yosemite National Park, turning into a gentle descent down through Virginia Canyon after the junction to Virginia Pass. The path down the canyon is through lodgepoles and meadows, with areas of trees downed by avalanches during high snow years. Camp is about 3.2 miles down canyon from the Virginia Pass junction. Virginia Canyon is a destination in itself, but two layover days allow day trips to the beautiful Miller Lake and McCabe Lakes.

Day 2: Layover--Ride to Miller Lake 8.6 miles round trip
8.6 miles round trip / 4.3 miles, 1,300' gain, 500' loss to Miller Lake
The day starts with a gentle descent down Virginia Canyon to the junction of the Pacific Crest Trail at mile 0.8. The trail to the right continues down the canyon before climbing 1,000' fairly steeply up Spiller Creek to a saddle at mile 4.6. Wonderful views to the west open up as the trail undulates another 1.4 miles to Miller Lake. The lake is shallow which makes it a good swimming lake. There are wonderful views across the canyon of the Tuolumne River as far as the Cathedral Range to the south from near the outlet of the lake or the low dome to the west of the lake. Return to camp by the same route.

Day 3: Virginia Canyon to Happy Jack
It is about a 5 mile ride to the beautiful meadows in Upper Cold Canyon.

Day 4: Layover--Ride to McCabe Lakes
The McCabe Lakes are beautiful gems. The ride to the lakes will be between 1 ½ hr to 2 hrs with plenty of time to fish and explore the upper lake.

Day 5: Happy Jack to Glen Aulin
A short five mile move to Glen Aulin. Time permitting, the group will ride down to view waterwheel Falls. It is about two miles from Glen Aulin to a great viewpoint to see the Falls.

Day 6: Glen Aulin to Tuolumne Meadows
The ride out is about 6 to 7 miles. Spectacular vistas of Cathedral Peak and of Tuolumne Meadows. Arrival around 1 to 2pm. Riders are transported back to Tuolumne Meadows.

Sample Itinerary: History of the Sierra - *subject to changes*

Binoculars and gloves are useful for this trip!
Ride open to anyone aged 13 years and older.

Day 1: Horseshoe Meadow Trailhead to base camp (specific campsite location will be dependent upon the ground conditions)
Meet at 7am at the Cottonwood Pack Station for breakfast and prep to ride. (It is suggested that camping out the night before at Horseshoe Meadow Campground will help with acclimatization to the 10,000' elevation).
We head east through a beautiful Lodgepole pine forest adjacent to meadows with Belding ground squirrels. We









then ride switchbacks to Cottonwood pass at 11,000' then start down toward out base camp at Big Whitney Meadow (10.000'). The views beyond show peaks of the Great Western Divide in Sequoia National Park where Big Horn sheep again roam in their historic range. At lunch we will discuss the Geology of the Sierra Nevada and the incredible forces that carved them, including rivers and glaciers.
After we settle into camp and have an incredible dinner, we sit around the fire and discuss weather, climate... (Should the weather forecast show clouds for the next days we may have our astronomy night tonight). The calls of the frogs and coyotes at night are sublime.
Meal included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Basecamp

Day 2: Rocky Basin lakes
Breakfast and then an introduction to birds and bird biology. We will walk through a variety of environments, creek, meadow, forest, and the all-important edges where these areas come together. Bring binoculars.
We'll have made our lunches and now take a day ride to Rocky Basin lakes. The spectacular double headwall is unique in the glacially carved Sierra and in these lakes are where endangered Yellow-legged frogs have been reintroduced. The trail crosses meadows and forest and begins a climb. Along the way we can see Alpine paintbrush, Evening primrose, carpets of red and yellow monkey flowers, shooting stars, buttercups, columbine and more. At the lakes we will have lunch and talk about the Alpine environment and wildflowers. We will also learn about the early explorers of the Sierra.
That evening after dinner we will have the Wild World! Skins and skulls and stories about animals and their adaptations, including bear biology.
After the sun sets we will look at the Night Sky and learn the stars, planets, constellations, and the stories behind them. (Unless we have had to present this the night before).
Meal included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Basecamp

Day 3: Golden Trout Creek
Today's day ride we will travel leisurely down Golden Trout Creek. The trail parallels the creek cascading to the side of the route and contains endemic Golden trout. There are a wide variety of flowers and shrubs as we descend. Before and after lunch, we will discuss the mixed conifer forests, trees, succession, and dendrochronology, the study of tree rings and what they can tell us.
In the evening we will have a twilight walk. How things change in the evening will be discovered as we use a Bat Detector to "hear" the many bats above us, our Night-Vision Binoculars, and Ultraviolet black light to search out night-time critters.
Meal included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Basecamp

Day 4: Siberian Outpost & History
After breakfast we will start our journey through time, following people from around the world and how they eventually came to the Sierra Nevada. Who were they, what did they hunt, gather and eat? Who did they trade with? Then you will learn how they survived by participating in activities that have been lauded as some of the most fun of the trip. You will learn to use an actual atlatl, an ancient spear thrower, and throw them at a target. As your skill quickly increases, there is always a friendly competition as to who will "bring home the supper!" Then we will learn to make arrowheads. Obsidian and flint chert, and ancient and modern tools will be provided as you learn this craft and gain an appreciation for how difficult it is. Bring leather gloves.
After lunch we will ride to the Siberian Outpost. A ride through our glacially-carved valley brings us to a delightful little used trail to Siberian Outpost where we enter Sequoia National Park. This open boreal plateau surrounded by trees is a place Paleo-Indians hunted. Arrowheads have been dated by park archaeologists to over 6.500 years-old. We will learn about the minerals in the granite and in particular, gold. The history of the Gold Rush and how gold was mined will be discussed. Then lunch as you relax in the peace of the mountains.
That evening in camp we will again sit around the campfire. Your guide will have a guitar and provide song books and stories on our last night in camp.
Meal included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Basecamp

Day 5: Last Ride
We break camp and head out along our entry trail to Cottonwood Pass (5 hour ride). Lunch just below the pass will allow a final thought on conservation and preservation that made this backcountry possible.
Meal included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Northern Yosemite - *subject to changes*

Day 1: Tuolumne Meadows to Glen Aulen
We ride north on the Pacific Crest Trail from the largest meadows in Yosemite. The trail follows the Lyell Fork of the Tuolumne River. The cascades and water falls as we head to Glen Aulin make this one of the most scenic rides in the Sierra.
Riding approx. 4 hours
Meals included: Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Glen Aulen

Day 2: Cold Canyon to Matterhorn Canyon
The morning ride goes through meadows and alternating forest before we switchback through the Hemlock Forest to reach Virginia Canyon. We travel through wildflowers, meadows and small lakes before reaching the deep Matterhorn Canyon. The deep granite canyon has beautiful campsites.
Riding approx. 4 hours
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Matterhorn Canyon

Day 3: Matterhorn Canyon to Smedberg Lake or Neal Meadow
This remote part of Yosemite has beautiful vistas of glacial polished mountains, lush meadows and wildflowers. We climb to the top of Benson Pass and meander down to Smedberg Lake. Volunteer Peak frames the panoramic view to the west. Rodgers and Neal Lake are only a short ride from the lake. The group will camp to be able to enjoy the excellent fishing and many ponds, lakes and streams to enjoy for the two nights.
Riding approx. 3 hours
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Smedberg Lake or Neal Meadow

Day 4: Layover Day
Great fishing for large rainbows. There are many secluded meadows and places to explore from camp.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Smedberg Lake or Neal Meadow

Day 5: Smedberg Lake to Lower Kerrick Meadow
We descend to Benson Lake and climb up through the manzanita to Seavy Pass. This is an enchanting area of small ponds, streams and trees. At Kerrick Creek the trail heads east to a camp in Kerrick Canyon. Small granite domes rise out of the canyon and it seems like a miniature Yosemite Valley.
Riding approx. 5 hours
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner









Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Lower Kerrick Meadow

Day 6: Lower Kerrick Canyon to camp near Upper Kerrick
The trail winds up through a series of meadows to a camp near the crest of the Sierra. Once at camp spend the afternoon at Pealer Lake or exploring the Buckeye Pass area.
Riding approx. 2 hours
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Lower Kerrick Meadow

Day 7: Upper Kerrick Canyon to Twin Lakes
We exit Yosemite National Park and wind our way down to Twin Lakes.
Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Kern River & Golden Trout - *subject to changes*

Day 1: Horseshoe Meadows to Little Whitney Meadow
Guests meet at Cottonwood Pack Station for gear drop off, breakfast and trip orientation. After breakfast our crew will introduce you to your surefooted riding animal (horse or mule) and teach you how to safely ride in the backcountry. Shortly after saddling up we hit the trail; turning our backs on civilization and entering the vast Golden Trout Wilderness. Settling into stride with our animal we traverse the massive Horseshoe Meadow which sits below Trail Pass (10,500 ft), the highest point of our journey. We switchback through groves of ancient Foxtail Pines climbing toward Trail Pass where we will be rewarded with stunning views of the Golden Trout Wilderness. We cross the Pacific Crest Trail at the top of the pass then switchback down towards Mulkey Meadow for lunch. From here, relatively flat single track trails cut through sprawling meadows allowing riders to appreciate the isolated beauty of the Golden Trout Wilderness. We follow Golden Trout Creek through Tunnel Meadow to our first night. There will be time to fish for brightly colored golden trout in their native waters before dinner. We enjoy a hearty meal around a warm campfire while watching our horses and mules graze in the nearby meadow.
Riding approx. 14.5 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Little Whitney Meadow

Day 2: Little Whitney Meadow to Kern River
Packers and wranglers gather the stock at first light while our cook serves hot coffee and breakfast around the campfire. After breakfast, guests will have time to fish while the packers break down camp and load the mules. Shortly after leaving Big Whitney Meadow we drop off the Kern Plateau and begin our descent towards the Kern River. We cross the picturesque Natural Bridge then continue down into the canyon below. The suspension bridge crossing the waters of the Kern marks the entrance to Sequoia National Park; our backcountry home for the next few days. A scenic hour of riding upriver leads us to camp situated along the bank of the Kern. Guests will have the opportunity to make some casts before dinner and hopefully catch a much sought-after Kern River Rainbow. We will enjoy another delicious backcountry meal around the campfire while listening to the Kern's rushing water below camp.
Riding approx. 10 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Kern River

Day 3: Layover
A layover day allows guests to fish and explore the world class fishery surrounding camp. Genetic testing has proven the fish living in these waters are the purest strains of the Kern River Rainbow, an isolated subspecies of rainbow trout and close relative of the Golden Trout. Due the remote location and difficult access to this section of the Kern, the river's many pools hold large rainbows eager to bite. Guests may spend the day fishing or relaxing around camp enjoying the amazing setting. Tonight's dinner will surely be full of fish stories and sharing pictures of the day's catch.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Kern River

Day 4: Layover
An additional layover day allows guests to explore the river farther upstream from camp. We will ride above the junction of Rattlesnake Creek and spend the day fishing excellent pocket water and glassy runs near Upper Funston Meadow. Those seeking a more relaxing day may continue riding to the Kern River Hot Springs to soak in the hot pools before returning to camp for dinner.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Kern River

Day 5: Kern River to Little Whitney Meadow
Today we climb out of the Kern River Canyon and return to our first night's camp at Little Whitney. Guest may spend the afternoon stretching their legs and exploring the rustic cabins of the historical Little Whitney Cow Camp or fishing for Golden Trout before dinner.
Riding approx. 10 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Little Whitney Meadow

Day 6: Layover
We spend the layover day riding to nearby Volcano Meadow and fishing the meandering waters of Volcano Creek. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife "the Volcanic Creek strain of California golden trout is considered to be the most genetically pure population within the native range." This infrequently visited area of the Golden Trout Wilderness offers spectacular views and a high probability of wildlife sightings. Due to the lack of visitors and fishing pressure, the beautiful Goldens of Volcano Creek are plentiful and willing to bite. We spend our last night enjoying the star filled sky above camp and sharing stories around the campfire.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Little Whitney Meadow

Day 7: Little Whitney Meadow to Horseshoe Meadows
Unfortunately, our adventure must come to an end and we return to the pack station at Horseshoe Meadows. While riding through the lush green meadows leading back to Trail Pass, we can't help but wish to spend another week on the trail. Reflecting on our journey, we have a new appreciation of what inspired John Muir to say "Going to the mountains is going home."
Riding approx. 14.5 miles
Meals included: Breakfast

Sample Itinerary: Whitney Trail Ride - *subject to changes*

Day 1: Horseshoe Meadow to Lower Rock Creek
Day 2: Layover
Day 3: Lower Rock Creek to Guitar Lake
Day 4: Option to climb Mt. Whitney and back to Crabtree/Sandy Meadow



Day 4: Option to climb Mt. Whitney and back to Crabtree/Sandy Meadow
Day 5: To Rock Creek
Day 6: Out to Horseshoe Meadow

Sample Itinerary: Silver Pass Trail Ride (in July); Fish Creek Trail Ride (in September) - *subject to changes*

Day 1: Pack Station to Mono Creek
Leaving Rock Creek Pack Station (10,000 ft.), our route follows the Mono Pass Trail which ascends Mt. Starr to Mono Pass (12,000 ft.). During the first part of this section one has a panoramic view of Little Lakes Valley, an area with more than twenty lakes framed by towering mountains including Mt. Morgan(13,748), Bear Creek Spire (13,705), Mt. Dade and Mt. Abbott.
The Mono Pass trail is one of the oldest routes through the Sierra and was used by Native Americans many years before the first white man came through which was the California Geological Survey in the early 1860's. During this climb to Mono Pass, the trail goes through meadows with scattered limber pine and wild flowers, crosses a few small creeks and then climbs above timberline. At all times there is an unrestricted view of the overwhelming landscape.
The flowers and trees of the east slope of the Sierra Nevada represent a different life zone than the westside. The lodge pole pine and aspen forest gives way to the white bark pine sub-alpine area. Lupine, Indian Paint Brush, white phlox, mustard and mountain mint cover the landscape as we travel to the top of Mono Pass. It is not uncommon to see families of marmots and the occasional coyote.
After crossing the pass.... a barren landscape...the route starts an easy descent going by Summit Lake; immediately afterwards, Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin and the northern Sierra range comes into view. The trail proceeds down past Trail Lake to Gold Creek where we enter the heavier timber and headwaters of Mono Creek alongside which we travel through a long valley with green meadows, wild flowers, stretches of lodge-pole pine, aspen thickets continually broken by small feeder creeks coming from tributary watersheds. The sounds of the Clarke nutcracker break the silence of the wilderness.
We make camp near the confluence of one of the many streams cascading into Mono Creek. Majestic Mono Rock towers over the canyon to the south. There are a series of meadows and camping areas from Fourth Recess to Hopkins Meadow. This area was once the center of the Native American summer trading camps.
Riding approx. 9 miles
Meals included: Dinner
Camp at Mono Creek

Day 2: Layover Day
Great areas to explore from a central camp alongside of Mono Creek. Side trips available to Third Recess Lake, Fourth Recess Lake, Hopkins Basin and Pioneer Basin.
Exploring Hopkins Basin...to Lower Hopkins Creek, which is a climb, is a one hour ride from the confluence of Mono Creek and Third Recess Creek. Once at the meadow, there is a trail that climbs straight up to Lower Hopkins Lake...about a 20-minute ride. Lower Hopkins Lake is the most beautiful lake in the Sierra – it sits on a high shelf, you would never know it's there unless you have been there before. To make a circle route, continue up the inlet stream and drop over a small hill to Hopkins Creek. The green meadows, winding crystal blue creek winding through the meadow and the red talus slopes of Red Slate Mountain make Hopkins Pass one of the most colorful vista points of the trip. The views looking south over the Recesses are awesome. Carpets of shooting stars, buttercups and yellow flowers alternate with the lush meadows dotted by gushing springs.
Third Recess...in easy stages, Third Recess Lake is a 40-minute hike or ride. This canyon opens up south of camp and provides a remote basin to explore.
Fourth Recess Lake is a thirty-minute trek up Mono Creek and Fourth Recess Creek. This is an easy hike for those not wanting to spend much time on the trail.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Mono Creek

Day 3: Third Recess and Mono Creek to Silver Pass Meadow
Traveling west to the John Muir Trail, ride through several life zones with groves of lodge pole pine giving way to the Jeffrey and Juniper Pine Forest. The trail parallels Mono Creek cascading to the side of the route. There are a wide variety of flowers, shrubs and trees as we descend to the large White Fir forest and tall aspens of First Recess. A short jaunt over a ridge and the Mono Creek Trail meets the John Muir Trail (Pacific Crest Trail). Going up the North Fork of Mono Creek there are spectacular stands of larkspur, white columbine and tiger lily as we enter Pocket Meadow. The trail zigzags up beneath the tumbling falls coming from Silver Pass Lake. Camp is in a sheltered meadow with a winding creek that abruptly ends at the granite cliffs overlooking Pocket Meadow. The panoramic views of the mountains to the south make this a favorite camp of those familiar with the John Muir Trail.
Riding approx. 10 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp at Silver Pass Meadow

Day 4: Silver Pass Meadow to Cascade Valley
The trail follows the North Fork of Mono Creek through meadows as we climb to Silver Pass Lake. The trail skirts the eastside of the lake with a gradual ascent to the pass. The views to the south towards Bear Ridge, Volcanic Nob, Selden Pass and Seven Gables is one of the most beautiful panoramas in the Sierra. To the north, the wide expanse of Fish Creek, the North Fork of the San Joaquin River, the Minarets and southern border of the Yosemite are in view once we reach to the top of Silver Pass (10,900ft). The trail switchbacks down a wide granite and sub-alpine meadow bowl with five lakes in view. We descend to Upper Fish Creek through a forest of Hemlocks, Firs and lodge pole pine past small brooks and lush meadows.
The last two miles follows close to Fish Creek...many waterfalls and beautiful pools as we go down canyon through several meadows. Cascade Valley is an area of vast lush meadows. The name comes from being able to hear Minnow and Purple Creeks cascading into the valley to join Fish Creek.
Riding approx. 11 miles
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp in Cascade Valley

Day 5: Layover Day
The layover day ride will head to Grassy Lake. Ride up Minaret Creek past Jackson Meadow to enjoy a day of fishing or swimming.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp in Cascade Valley

Day 6: Cascade Valley to Mammoth Mountain
We switchback up 1500 ft. to Purple Lake to rejoin the John Muir Trail. The trail follows the ridge that overlooks Fish Creek and the San Joaquin River. Spectacular views back of the Silver Divide, Jackson Meadow and northwest of the North Fork of the San Joaquin River. The trail breaks west through small meadows in a Hemlock Forest as we climb to Duck Lake. We have lunch before rejoining the trail that follows up and around Duck Lake to Duck Pass (11,000). The trail to the roadhead descends 1800 ft. past many lakes with Mammoth Mountain and the wide expanses of the volcanic region of the eastern sierra in view to the north.
A van meets us to take us back to the pack station. Generally we arrive around 5 PM.
Riding approx. 10 miles
Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Kern Peak Trail

Day 1: Cottonwood Pack Station to Kern Peak Stringer (11 miles)
The path drops 100' from the Cottonwood pack station to the Cottonwood Pass trail. Continue straight to cross Horseshoe Meadow toward Trail Pass. In one mile, the path will merge with a trail running along the east side of the meadow as it continues up 600' through forest to 10,500' (Trail Pass) and the junction with the Pacific Crest Trail. Enjoy views of the Golden Trout Wilderness before continuing straight, to drop 1,150' in 2.3 miles through open forest to the trail junction at Mulkey Meadow, a favorite lunch spot.
Meals included: Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Kern Peak

Day 2: Layover - Ride up towards Kern Peak Kern Peak (11.2 miles, 2,800' gain and loss)
Kern Peak is one of the most prominent points in the eastern section of the Golden Trout Wilderness. Those who reach the top are rewarded with stunning views of the Great Western Divide and the Sierra Crest towering above the Kern River drainage to the north, the Panamint Mountains beyond Owens Valley to the east, and, on very clear days, the mountains of Southern California to the south. Travel to the top or turn back along the way after enjoying the forest and meadows along the trail.
The base camps are near the Kern Peak trail. Have your packer show you how to access the trail rather than returning to Junction 8920 to start the trip. The Kern Peak trail follows the Kern Peak Stringer, crossing the creek and side creeks, as it climbs steadily through the forest. The trail may fade at times, but there are tree blazes to mark the way. The path eventually veers away from the creek to climb steeply in open terrain to Kern Peak.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Kern Peak

Day 3: Kern Peak Stringer to Little Whitney Meadows
This a relatively short day of riding as we climb out of Ramshaw Meadows and ride to cross Golden Trout Creek below Tunnel Meadows. The trail follows Golden Trout Creek past Groundhog Meadow and past the Cinder Cone and ancient lava flows before arriving at Little Whitney Meadows.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Little Whitney Meadows

Day 4: Little Whitney Meadows to Big Whitney Meadows (8.6 miles, 2,250' gain, 950' loss)
Travel around the north side of Little Whitney Meadows to the trail that will follow Johnson Creek north, passing through Salt Lick Meadow before crossing to the east side of the creek. The trail climbs 1,900' in five miles to a saddle east of Johnson Peak before dropping 200' to the meadows of Barigan Stringer. Cross the creek to encounter two trail junctions.
The first junction is the Rocky Basin Lakes Trail; go to the right. The second junction in just 0.1 miles is the Barigan Stringer Trail; go to the left toward Big Whitney Meadow to climb 200' over a low ridge before dropping 500' to the Siberian Pass junction at the edge of Big Whitney Meadow. Follow the trail east toward Cottonwood Pass 1/3 mile to our camp on the right side of the trail.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Big Whitney Meadows

Day 5: Layover
Ride to Siberian Outpost or to Rocky Basin Lakes Riding north up to Siberian Pass gives riders the opportunity to see the Borreal Ridge. Looking north we see the barren Siberian Outpost. Stunning views north to the Great Western Divide and Mt. Whitney.
Or, those wanting a longer ride may want to head to Rocky Basin Lakes.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
Camp near Big Whitney Meadows

Day 6: Big Whitney Meadows to Cottonwood Pack Station
Time to head home by traveling up Stokes Stringer and riding through Forests and streams to reach Cottonwood Pass.
We descend to Horseshoe Meadows to reach Cottonwood Pack Station.
Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch

Sample Itinerary: Winchester Trail

Day 1: Cottonwood Pack Station to Kern Peak Stringer
Day 2: Layover
Day 3: To Little Whitney Meadows
Day 4: Layover
Day 5: To Big Whitney Meadows
Day 6: Out to Cottonwood Pack Station

Sample Itinerary: Mt Langley Trail

Day 1: Cottonwood Pack Station to Big Whitney Meadow
Day 2: Layover
Day 3: To Upper Rock Creek
Day 4: Layover
Day 5: Out to Cottonwood Pack Station

Sample Itinerary: Lake of the Lone Indian Trail

Day 1: Rock Creek Pack Station to Mono Creek (9 miles)
Leaving Rock Creek Pack Station (10,000 ft.), our route follows the Mono Pass Trail which ascends Mt. Starr to Mono Pass (12,000 ft.). During the first part of this section one has a panoramic view of Little Lakes Valley, an area with more than twenty lakes framed by towering mountains including Mt. Morgan(13,748), Bear Creek Spire (13,705), Mt. Dade and Mt. Abbott. The Mono Pass trail is one of the oldest routes through the Sierra and was used by Native Americans many years before the first man came through which was the California Geological Survey in the early 1860's. During this climb to Mono Pass, the trail goes through meadows with scattered limber pine and wild flowers, crosses a few small creeks and then climbs above timberline. At all times there is an unrestricted view of the overwhelming landscape.
The flowers and trees of the east slope of the Sierra Nevada represent a different life zone than the westside. The lodge pole pine and aspen forest gives way to the white bark pine sub-alpine area. Lupine, Indian Paint Brush, white phlox, mustard and mountain mint cover the landscape as we travel to the top of Mono Pass. It is not uncommon to see families of marmots and the occasional coyote.
After crossing the pass.... a barren landscape...the route starts an easy descent going by Summit Lake; immediately afterwards, Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin and the northern Sierra range comes into view. The trail proceeds down past Trail Lake to Gold Creek where we enter the heavier timber and headwaters of Mono Creek

alongside which we travel through a long valley with green meadows, wild flowers, stretches of lodge-pole pine, aspen thickets continually broken by small feeder creeks coming from tributary watersheds. The sounds of the Clarke nutcracker break the silence of the wilderness.
We make camp near the confluence of one of the many streams cascading into Mono Creek. Majestic Mono Rock towers over the canyon to the south. There are a series of meadows and camping areas from Fourth Recess to Hopkins Meadow. This area was once the center of the Native American summer trading camps.

Day 2: Layover Day
Great areas to explore from a central camp alongside of Mono Creek. Side trips available to Third Recess Lake, Fourth Recess Lake, Hopkins Basin and Pioneer Basin. Exploring Hopkins Basin…to Lower Hopkins Creek, which is a climb, is a one hour ride from the confluence of Mono Creek and Third Recess Creek. Once at the meadow, there is a trail that climbs straight up to Lower Hopkins Lake…about a 20-minute ride. Lower Hopkins Lake is the most beautiful lake in the Sierra – if sets on a high shelf, you would never know it's there unless you have been there before. To make a circle route, continue up the inlet stream and drop over a small hill to Hopkins Creek. The green meadows, winding crystal blue creek winding through the meadow and the red talus slopes of Red Slate Mountain make Hopkins Pass one of the most colorful vista points of the trip. The views looking south over the Recesses are awesome. Carpets of shooting stars, buttercups and yellow flowers alternate with the lush meadows dotted by gushing springs. Third Recess…in easy stages, Third Recess Lake is a forty-minute hike or ride. This canyon opens up south of camp and provides a remote basin to explore. Fourth Recess Lake is a thirty-minute trek up Mono Creek and Fourth Recess Creek. This is an easy hike for those not wanting to spend much time on the trail. Pioneer Basin is a one hour ride to Mud Lake (Pioneer Lake #1). This wide-open basin has six lakes with Golden, Rainbow and Brook trout. An ideal day trip is to follow the streams and meadows to Lake #4, cross country over to Lake #5 and circle the basin following the shores of Lake #3, #2A and Lake #2. This sub-alpine region represents the finest in high mountain meadows, flowers and panoramic views of the Sierra.

Day 3: Third Recess and Mono Creek to Silver Pass Meadow (10 miles)
Traveling west to the John Muir Trail, ride through several life zones with groves of lodge pole pine giving way to the Jeffrey and Juniper Pine Forest. The trail parallels Mono Creek cascading to the side of the route. There are a wide variety of flowers, shrubs and trees as we descend to the large White Fir forest and tall aspens of First Recess. A short jaunt over a ridge and the Mono Creek Trail meets the John Muir Trail (Pacific Crest Trail). Going up the North Fork of Mono Creek there are spectacular stands of larkspur, white columbine and tiger lily as we enter Pocket Meadow. The trail zigzags up beneath the tumbling falls coming from Silver Pass Lake. Camp is in a sheltered meadow with a winding creek that abruptly ends at the granite cliffs overlooking Pocket Meadow. The panoramic views of the mountains to the south make this a favorite camp of those familiar with the John Muir Trail.

Day 4: Silver Pass Meadow to Jackson Meadow (8 miles)
It is a moderate 1500 ft climb to Silver Pass through high mountain meadows and spectacular unobstructed views of the Sierra to the south. Bear Creek, Selden Pass and the northern boarder of Kings Canyon National Park open up as we reach the summit of Silver Pass (10,800 ft). The northern view is of the Minarets, Mt. Ritter and Banner and the peaks that form the southern border of Yosemite National Park Riders meander down through several lakes and turn west to the Lake of the Lone Indian. It is a short climb until we enter the secluded lakes of the Silver Divide region. Travel through meadows and streams to reach Grassy Lake. Camp will be near a series of meadows and streams that join Minnow Creek from Olive, Grassy, and Wilbur Mae Lakes.

Days 5 & 6: Layover Days
Explore Olive Lake Basin, Grassy Lake, Wilbur Mae and Lake Peter Pande.
Camp is located in an isolated section of the Sierra on one of the largest meadows is in the central Sierra. It is an hour trip to Olive Lake through meadows, forest and streams. Spectacular waterfalls cascade off the granite canyon from Peter Pande Lake. For those looking for a full day hike, a knap sack trail follows west of Olive Lake past a series of lakes that allows you to circle back to camp past Peter Pande Lake. Great riding through meadows, forests to a wide variety of lakes near camp. Olive Lake is less than an hour and a half and a favorite trip is up canyon past Grassy Lake and climbing over to spend the day at Peter Pande.
Fishing is outstanding from the streams in the meadows near camp to unsurpassed lake fishing. It would take five days to visit the different lakes near camp.

Day 7: Jackson Meadow to Mammoth Lakes (13 miles)
Head north on the Minnow Creek Trail. It is a gradual descent until we turn east to drop into Cascade Valley. Fish Creek is a large tributary of the San Joaquin River and we ford the creek in a beautiful meadow. We switchback up 1500 ft. to Purple Lake. The views of the creeks tumbling into Cascade Valley answer the question of how this region was named. We climb gradually to follow the ridge that overlooks Fish Creek and the San Joaquin River. Spectacular views back of the Silver Divide, Jackson Meadow and northwest of the North Fork of the San Joaquin River. The trail breaks west through small meadows in a Hemlock Forest as we climb to Duck Lake. We have lunch before rejoining the trail that follows up and around Duck Lake to Duck Pass (11,000). The trail to the roadhead descends 1800 ft. past many lakes with Mammoth Mountain and the wide expanses of the volcanic region of the eastern sierra in view to the north. A van meets us to take us back to the pack station.
Generally we arrive at Rock Creek around 5 PM.



Rates and Dates 2026 - RTCA10

Rates include: Tent accommodations, All meals & guided pack trip
Saddle bags are provided

Packages and Options

Season	Description	~US$
A 2026	6 day trip - Silver Pass	$2700
B 2026	5 day trip - History of the Sierra	$2200
C 2026	10 day trip - Evolution Valley	$4500
D 2026	6 day trip - Virginia Lakes to Tuolumne Meadows	$2800
E 2026	5 day trip - Mono Creek	$2450
F 2026	10 day trip - Northern Yosemite, Tuolumne Meadows to Leavitt Meadows	$4700
G 2026	7 day trip - Ansel Adams	$0

Rates Note:2% charge for USFS fee 8% charge for regulatory taxes $15 Wilderness Permit Fee (mandatory)

Transfer Option

Description

2026	Meet on Day 1 according to itinerary

Tour Dates

Season	Tour Dates

Rates do not include:Sleeping bag and mat, Alcoholic Drinks, Fishing equipment and license, Gratuities, Taxes & Wilderness Permit Fee ($15 mandatory)

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	Beginner	Novice	Intermediate	Strong Interm.	Advanced	ride English	ride Western	mostly arena	mostly hacking
1.		☐				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.		☐				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.		☐				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.		☐				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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 maling address):

_____

I have enclosed a check for the deposit ◯

Additional Signatures:

2. _____

3. _____

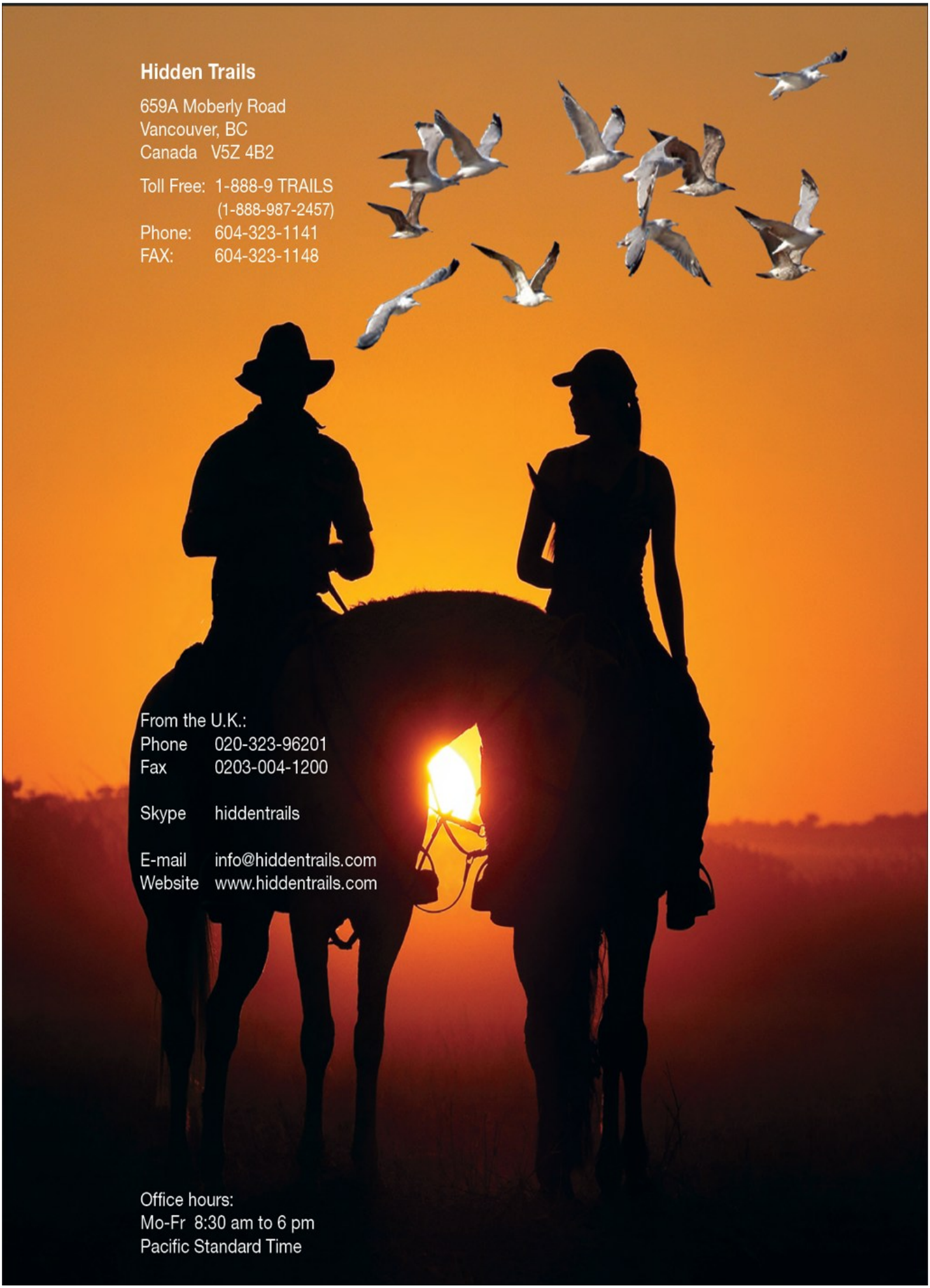
4. _____

Travel Cancellation Insurance Credit Card required

Sign me (us) up ◯ initial _____

No, we will provide our own ◯ initial _____

Hidden Trails Ltd. 659A Moberly Road Vancouver, BC V5Z 4B3 FAX: 604-323-1148 Phone: 604-323-1141


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Phone 020-323-96201
Fax 0203-004-1200
Skype hiddentrails
E-mail info@hiddentrails.com
Website www.hiddentrails.com
Office hours:
Mo-Fr 8:30 am to 6 pm
Pacific Standard Time