



SOUTHERN CROSS
HORSE TREKS AUSTRALIA

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FACT SHEET 2015

Find all the information about the horse riding tours and answers to Frequently Asked Question in the list below.

About The Horse Riding & Tours

RIDING ABILITY:

Trail riding holidays with Southern Cross Horse Treks are for experienced (good intermediate to advanced) riders only.

For the minimum riding ability required (intermediate) you are expected to have a firm and balanced seat, had formal riding lessons to master the basic horse riding aids and skills, be confident and capable to control a fit and forward going horse in all paces (including long stretches of posting trot and gallops) in open, varied, sometimes challenging country and to be able to mount and dismount unassisted.

It is a great advantage if you are a fit and proficient rider.

Beginner and novice riders and children are not suitable for our rides (occasionally exceptions are made for children aged 15 years and over depending on riding ability).

We regret we are unable to take riders who only ride in Western Style, as our horses are not trained in this discipline.

For safety reasons we reserve the right to prevent a client from riding if we feel they do not fulfil any of the above competence levels.

RIDING TERRAIN:

We ride through NSW State Forests, private farm properties, Crown Land and some public rural roads. Most country is undulating to steep terrain with some narrow overgrown rainforest trails.

Rides go into remote and isolated areas, with limited mobile phone reception and assistance from third parties not immediately available.

Leading the horses on foot over short distances may on occasion be required and a reasonable level of fitness is required for all horse riding tours.

TYPE OF HORSES: total of 11 horses

We have 7 Purebred Arabians and 1 Andalusian-Thoroughbred cross in work (plus 3 retired horses). 5 Arabian horses are between 14.1 and 15 hands high. There are only 2 taller horses: a 15.3 hands high Arabian and the 16.2 hands high Andalusian-TB.

The working trail horses' ages are between 8 and 19 years; they live outside in the herd year-round and are occasionally stabled in bad weather. The horses are schooled and well trained for long distance trail riding, forward going, spirited, responsive and in excellent condition.

All Arabian horses come from good endurance bloodlines and have completed 40 km endurance competitions as part of their early training.

Some of the horses are suitable for intermediate riders and some are only for advanced riders. Every effort is made to match horse and rider.

RIDING STYLE:

- The horses are trained to be ridden English style with a loose rein or light contact.
- When riding uphill or galloping riders should sit in a raised or 2-point position (similar to when jumping), standing in the stirrups and leaning forward, alleviating the horse's back.
- Downhill slopes are always in walk and riders should sit straight, balanced and slightly standing in stirrups (not leaning back), to alleviate the horse's back.

TACK:

- Tack is of a very high standard and kept in good condition.
- Australian made Endurance saddles: leather (Mackinder) and synthetic (Wintec). Wintec All Purpose and Dressage Saddles.
- Snaffle bits, hackamores or bitless bridles/ Natural Horsemanship halters.
- Synthetic Endurance breastplates, some with martingale.
- Small saddlebag to carry water bottle (supplied), personal items for the day, lunch on some days.

LENGTH and PACE OF THE RIDES:

Except for the first day (3 hours) and the beach ride (2 hours), all day rides are 4 - 6 hours in the saddle. This is broken up by lunch (minimum 1 hour) and sometimes an extra refreshment stop. Horses are unsaddled for lunch. After each stop riders lead the horses for a few minutes to loosen the horses' (and the riders') muscles before mounting.

Ride pace is varied and moderate (long downhill walks, fast pace uphill) with some fast canters / galloping sections.

From a riding level perspective all riding tours are similar. It should not be assumed that the stationary riding program (Tour A) is easier or less challenging than the progressive trek tours (Tours B & C).

WEIGHT LIMIT:

Maximum weight is 80 kilo. Advanced riders up to 85 kilo will be considered depending on their height.

For the horses' sake: It is important that you give us your accurate weight (even if you are not close to the weight limit) because of the size and light frame of our Arabian horses, the pace of our rides, the hot weather in summer and the partly steep terrain. We plan our groups carefully according to the rider abilities and weight so that is it suitable for the horses and more enjoyable for you!

GROUP SIZE:

Maximum of 4 horse-riding guests.

GUIDING:

Owner-operator Kathy Holtrust guides all horse rides.

STAFF:

This is a one-woman (Kathy) operated small business. Local volunteers, international traveling helpers (backpackers) and casual workers (depending on group size) provide additional support (e.g. support vehicle for transfers and bringing lunch).

SADDLING:

Guests can offer to help with the horses (but not in the kitchen!) and get their horse ready in the morning, saddle / unsaddle and wash & clean up the horse and tack, if they want (always supervised), but this is by no means compulsory or expected.

SAFETY:

- The guide carries a special mobile phone for regional areas (but not with 100% reception), UHF radio for communication with forestry workers and first aid kit.
- Riding helmets must be worn at all time while on the horse.
- Also refer to "Riding in Australian Weather Conditions" and "Riding Terrain".

RIDING IN AUSTRALIAN WEATHER CONDITIONS:

Australia is a country of extreme weather conditions. Although most of the time the weather is fantastic, there can be quite severe weather conditions, in particular when compared to European weather.

On the hottest summer days we start the rides very early in the morning and return early afternoon to spend the afternoons relaxing near the swimming pool.

Ride pace is adjusted to weather and terrain conditions (slower pace in hot, humid and / or wet weather, slippery trails).

In case of severe weather warnings (severe rain or storms) and local bush fire danger we may be unable to go out riding due to safety concerns. We will try to arrange an alternative program for you whenever possible (Wine Tasting Tour, Port Macquarie town, Koala Hospital).

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR BOOKING:

Age, height, weight, riding experience, horse riding level, horse preference and any special diet or allergies. Please complete the Booking Enquiry Form when making a reservation.

NON-RIDERS:

Non-riders can be accommodated, best during the stationary ride, but it is recommended that non-riders have a rental car to explore the area. The non-rider can sometimes travel with the support vehicle to the lunch meeting and can also be transported to the other accommodations if required (during trek).

CHILDREN:

Children of 15 years and over can be accepted if they are competent riders and are accompanied by a riding parent.

About The Accommodation

ACCOMMODATION:

Kerewong is a 60 acres horse farm property adjacent to the Kerewong State Forest. The main residence, Kerewong Lodge, has a large communal dining / living room and wide veranda, which overlook the horses grazing in the field, the saltwater pool and garden with native Australian plants and trees and wildlife – in particular parrots and wallabies.

Kerewong Lodge has 2 single bedrooms and 1 double / twin bedroom. The separate studio-style Cabin has a queen and single bed (for single / double / twin occupancy). All rooms have their own bathroom with shower and toilet (except 1 single room, consequently in the event of 4 solo travellers, 2 singles will share a bathroom). Maximum occupancy at Kerewong is 6-7 people (but max. 4 horse riders).

During the Centre-based riding programs guests will stay at Kerewong, riding out every day in different directions and returning to Kerewong in the afternoon.

For the Trek tours we stay at 2 (B-tour) or 3 (C-tour) other accommodations:

- The Villa at Hannam Vale (1 night) has 3 spacious and luxurious double bedrooms with bathroom. This is a very exclusive Guesthouse accommodation with gourmet meals.
- The Roundhouse at Comboyne (1 night) is a comfortable cabin with 2 double bedrooms and 1 bathroom, stunning views and an outdoor hot tub on the veranda.
- Diamond Waters Treehouse Retreat (2 nights during extended trek only) has two unique luxury Treehouse cabins, each with a double bedroom, bathroom and a single sofa bed in the separate living room.

Bed linen, towels, pool towels (in summer), hand and shower wash are provided in the rooms.

Hair dryers are provided.

Rooms are not serviced during the ride but please ask if you need anything replaced or cleaned.

During the Trek your luggage is transported to the other accommodations by support vehicle.

MEALS:

- Emphasis is on fresh home-cooked meals and light salad lunches.
- Buffet style breakfast with toast, condiments, cereals, yogurt, fruit. Cooked eggs & bacon on some mornings.
- Lunch during day rides: light picnic lunches (cheese and salads) brought to you by 4WD support vehicle or saddlebag (sandwich) lunch.
- 2 course dinner at the dining table in the communal area, international and Australian specialties: beef stew, pasta, chicken, fish, roast dinner, barbecue.
- Vegetarians and gluten free diets can be catered for (request on booking).

DRINKS:

- Juice, soft drinks (lemonade and coke), filtered rain (tank) water, milk, tea, coffee and hot chocolate are freely available on a self-serve basis.
- Wine is served with dinner.
- Beer and additional wine can be purchased at local bottle shop on arrival (during pick-up transfer), the winery ride destination or BYO (Bring Your Own).

- Our drinking water is rain (tank) water and we recommend that you drink the filtered water from the water jugs in the common area or fridge.

MOBILE PHONES & INTERNET:

Mobile phone reception on the Kerewong farm property is poor and limited to SMS texting. The other accommodations of the Trek tours (Tour B & C) have normal mobile phone reception. Most riding days have some opportunity for mobile phone reception.

You can leave the Kerewong home phone number +61 2 6556 9604 with your family and friends in case they need to contact you while on holidays (please note the time difference with your home country!)

Free WiFi internet access is available at Kerewong for guests who bring their own Internet device. The use is limited to "standard" internet and email usage and short Skype phone calls. Please don't download large files like movies or large photo files, make long Skype video calls, etc.

LAUNDRY FACILITIES AND WATER SUPPLY:

Kerewong is depended on rainfall for the total water supply. Therefore there are no laundry facilities offered for horse riding guests. Please be aware that our water is precious. If you wish you can hand wash your most urgent clothes in the bathroom basin and you are welcome to hang them to dry on the washing line behind the garage.

Depending on the water reserves some exceptions for washing clothes can be made for international guests that are traveling for a longer period - please make requests when booking.

About The Location And Travel Information

LOCATION:

Southern Cross Horse Treks operates from a horse farm property called "Kerewong". Kerewong is located in the Lorne Valley on the NSW Mid North Coast, south west of Port Macquarie, on Australia's East Coast between Sydney and Brisbane.

Address: 322 Tipperary Road, Lorne NSW 2439

Phone: +61 (0)2 6556 9604

Email: info@horsetreks.com.au

TRAVEL INFORMATION:

Pick-up locations: We arrange pick-up transfers from anywhere in Port Macquarie (domestic airport, bus stop, town centre or hotel) and Kendall train station. Unless you have a car, you will need our transfer pick-up, as there is no public transport past Kendall and a taxi transfer will be costly.

Transfer times are fixed. Extra transfers at a different time may incur an additional transfer fee, depending on circumstances. Please check with us before booking your flight or train to confirm the times are suitable.

For the departure day earlier transfer times can be requested, in particular if you have an international connecting flight.

How to get to the pick up locations:

- Flight from Sydney - Port Macquarie: 1-hour flight with Qantas Airlines or Virgin Australia
- Flight from Brisbane - Port Macquarie: 1.5-hour direct flight with Qantas Airlines or Virgin Australia

You can find flight details and book your flight on websites for Qantas (www.qantas.com.au) or Virgin Australia (www.virginaustralia.com).

The pick up transfer is planned with the Sydney flights arriving around 17.05 hrs. - 17.15 hrs.

- Train from Sydney or Brisbane:

The train journey from Sydney to Kendall takes 6.5 hours, slow but scenic journey. Brisbane-Kendall train takes 8 hours.

It is essential that you book your train ticket in advance online via website www.nswtrainlink.info

If your plane or train is delayed we will wait for you to arrive. Because we drive to the airport first and then to the train station it may occur that we are not in time for the train arrival because the flights are delayed, but we will come to the train station for the pick-up transfer a.s.a.p.

Train and plane tickets are sold per one-way trip and a return trip is the same price as two one-way tickets. An interesting way to travel is do a one-way journey by train and the return trip by air or vice versa.

- Self-drive to Kerewong by car:

Driving instructions can be found on the website www.horsetreks.com.au at [Location & Map page](#).

Travel time by car from Sydney (approx. 4 hours). Travel time by car from Brisbane (approx. 7 hour).

Check in from 15:00 (3 pm). Check out 11:00 am

FIXED TRANSFER TIMES AND LOCATIONS:

- Arrival Day Pick up:

Port Macquarie: airport, central bus station or hotel: between 17:15 - 17:30 (5.15 - 5.30pm), meeting flights from Sydney arriving in Port Macquarie between 16:30 and 17:30 (4.30 - 5.30pm).

Kendall train station 18:15 (6.15pm) to meet the train from Sydney.

Separate pick-up times for Brisbane train times possible on request.

- Departure Day Drop off:

Port Macquarie airport from 11:00 (11am) (earlier on request for international connections).

Kendall train station: to meet 09:00 (9am) train to Sydney.

VISIT TO PORT MACQUARIE KOALA HOSPITAL:

We arrange visiting the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and historic Roto House at the end of your holiday, but only for guests that require transfer to Port Macquarie. Guests that are interested in visiting the Koala Hospital should plan and book their travel accordingly (departure from Port Macquarie). Travelers departing by train from Kendall will not be able to visit the Koala Hospital.

CLIMATE & WEATHER CONDITIONS:

First of all it is not true that it never rains in Australia, so bring your raincoat. Summer months are November to March. Hottest months (generally) are January and February with tropical hot-humid weather (>30 degrees) and afternoon thunderstorms.

January and February are generally also the months with the highest rainfall (sub-tropical climate). Winter months (June, July, August) usually have good weather for riding: mostly dry conditions, warm sunny days and cold frosty nights.

In-between-seasons (April, May, September, October, Nov.) have a variety of weather due to the changing season: generally sunny and warm but also rain or wind; many flowering trees and scrubs.

WILDLIFE:

Most of Australia's wildlife is active at night, but during the day on the farm or on horseback you may see wallabies, kangaroos, bandicoots, goannas, lizards, colourful bird life (king parrots, rainbow lorikeets, black cockatoo's, kookaburras, eagles) and if you are lucky maybe even a koala in a gumtree! We regularly see dolphins in the ocean during the beach ride.

Snakes are sometimes seen on the rides but have never caused any problems as the horses are used to seeing the snakes and the snakes will move away when we encounter them, as most are not aggressive.

CLOTHING / WHAT TO BRING:

- Suitable riding boots or shoes (with a small heel to prevent slipping through stirrups).
- Lightweight rain/wind jacket that fits into the (provided) saddlebags; We can provide heavier and warm long oilskin riding raincoats (drizabones) for occasional cold rainy weather in winter.
- Helmets are compulsory: you can bring your own or helmets can be provided.
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, compact camera, riding gloves, and all the other usual things for travel in Australia and horse riding
- Long sleeved shirts (protection from sun and branches)
- Warm slippers for winter evenings
- Tall leather boots are not recommended, especially in summer, because of the hot weather and humidity. Instead it is recommend to wear short riding boots with short chaps. A small assortment of second hand short chaps is available for guests to use.

AUSTRALIAN QUARANTINE REGULATIONS:

Please be aware that all used horse riding gear must be declared on arrival into Australia and must be clean and free of sand and horsehair.

INSURANCE:

International guests must have adequate medical and travel insurance. It is recommended that all guest have travel insurance and travel cancellation insurance.

INDEMNITY:

Guests will be asked to sign an indemnity form on arrival before they ride.

MEDICAL:

The nearest hospital is in Port Macquarie (50 km, 45 minutes from Kerewong Farm). General Practitioners are located in medical centres in Laurieton, approx. 30 minutes away.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Horse riding is the priority at Kerewong and most of the days are filled with the riding. Afternoons after the rides are mostly spent at leisure, reading, snoozing, pool, wildlife & bird watching, walking.

We spend time at the local winery we ride to and visit the Koala Hospital and historic Roto House at the end of your holiday (Port Macquarie transfers only).

Whale watching boat tours operate in Port Macquarie from May to November and those interested may be able to book a tour on the morning prior to the departure flight.