

## Safety Information

In order to make sure everybody is safe on the trail, we need to discuss the following riding and safety guidelines prior to setting off.

After reading this document the guide will ask you to sign a form stating that you have read and understood it.

## Pre-Trip Safety Briefing

The guide will introduce the tack to you. He/She will demonstrate the bridle, reins, rope for tethering, saddle, stirrups, girth etc.

Once you are mounted, you can practice turning your horse using neck reining. This is different to English riding where the hands are held parallel to each other, one on each side of the horse's neck. With neck reining the reins are generally held in one hand and the hands are moved across to the side of the neck that the rider wishes the horse to turn. Most horses in Chile will NOT understand English commands so it is important to get this right early on!

Your guide will explain the different style of stirrup cup and check that you are wearing the correct type of boots. Please let your guide know if you feel there are any problems with your stirrups.

Please note! It is very hard, nearly impossible, to adjust stirrups when mounted so this needs to be done either before you mount or after you are mounted by asking a baqueano to do it for you.

Your guide will explain the girth and how this gets tightened. Again, it is very difficult to tighten this when mounted. Every rider is responsible for **checking their own girth** once you have been assigned a horse. The baqueanos are **ALWAYS** available to help with this so please ask if you feel it needs tightening. Girths should be checked before and after mounting, a few minutes into the trail and again before descending or ascending any steep hills.

If at any time, you have any concerns about any aspect of the tack, the horse, your comfort or that of your horse you must bring this to the attention of the guide and/or one of the baqueanos.

Again, if at any time you feel nervous or worried about anything encountered on the trail, this should be discussed with the guide immediately.

## Horse/Riding Safety Disclaimer:

You accept when booking a trip of this nature that there are inherent risks involved and confirm that you are fully aware of and accept these. Horse Riding Patagonia Adventures advises all riders to wear a helmet for your own safety. This has to be BHS/ISO 2010 approved hard hat equipped with a retention harness which must be fastened at all times while on the horse. We have some hats available for use but due to the personal fit obtained with a well fitted helmet we recommend riders (and especially children) bring their own. **It is law in Chile to wear a riding helmet.**

You understand that you may be required to sign a separate acknowledgement and acceptance of personal liability by us before being allowed to ride. Refusal to sign will result in immediate cancellation of your booking without any claim against us for compensation.

## Safety Information

### Riding and Horse Safety:

Please assume every horse will kick so be aware of this and take care approaching horses in and around the corrals and when mounting/dismounting, tethering at lunch stops etc.

Before mounting, always have the reins in your left hand. Always have someone hold the horse while you mount and try and find a substitute mounting block to help get onto the saddle in one fluid motion. It also helps to have someone hold the right stirrup while you mount to help compensate for the weight on the other side.

When riding on the trail, keep 2 horse distances apart. **NEVER** use the horse in front as a means of slowing down or stopping your own horse. This puts you and the horse at considerable risk of being kicked.

The guide will sometimes ask you to dismount and walk up and down steep hills. When doing this always lead the horse from the rope and halter (never from the reins). Walk ahead of your horse and keep your horse on a loose rope behind you. When descending/ascending hills when mounted, listen to the advice of the guide. Sit well forward when ascending and lean slightly back when descending.

Never canter or gallop up to or past a rider going at a slower pace.

Always warn people behind you of low branches. This may sound obvious but always lean forward to go under a low branch, never backwards! Never hold a branch and then let it flick it back and hit the rider behind you.

**Never overtake the guide or baqueano riding at the front of the group.** Always respect the advice and safety of the guides and the baqueanos. They know the terrain and any possible hazards that might be encountered.

Do not get off your horse alone on the trail to take a picture or for any reason whatsoever. If you drop something or want to take a picture, tell the guide and everyone will wait for you. Alternatively, if he or she is ahead have another rider or a baqueano accompany you and hold your horse for you while you dismount (or take a photo). Never try and retrieve something on the floor from the back of your horse!

Do not take off or put on clothing while in the saddle. Some horses are easily spooked by this.

### Ride with awareness:

Know what might frighten your horse like plastic bags or unusually painted fences. Always keep your feet in the stirrups. Watch out for stray wildlife jumping out in unexpected places (especially in the low lying bushes when riding on the pampas where birds or hares can fly or jump out and startle your horse).

Do not lag behind then gallop on ahead to catch the other horses. This can make the horse frantic in trying to catch the others and it can over excite the other horses as you approach the group. Stay with the group always.

Any items attached to your saddle need to be firmly tied on so as not to fall off and startle your own or other horses. If you notice anything rattling in your saddle bag and spooking your horse, make sure and rearrange this – get the guide to help you.

The guide will stop regularly for photo stops, toilet breaks and water stops. If however you want to stop at any other time on the trail, please make this clear to the guide so he can either stop the group or have a baqueano wait with you.

Watch out for potholes and stray wire from fences. Large areas of the pampas were once fenced for sheep and cattle so it is not uncommon to see stray wire lying around. In addition, some areas have potholes. Make sure and bring any hazards such as these to the attention of your fellow riders and ride carefully until the hazard has passed.

## Safety Information

Sometimes the guide will ask you to dismount when crossing wooden bridges, especially in high winds or wet weather. When crossing bridges pay close attention to your horse's footing and maintain contact with your horse's mouth at all times. Keep your horse in a walk – NEVER trot.

Ride in single file and do not get too close to the horse in front. **Be aware that fast flowing water can spook your horse so if you are worried in any way, speak to the guide before you cross the bridge and ask that you dismount and have your horse led over the bridge with you following behind on foot.**

During deeper river crossings, resist the temptation to put your legs right up onto the front of the saddle as this will leave you insecure if for any reason the horse should stumble or spook in the water. Simply lift your feet up and out from the knee and guide your horse through the water. Maintain contact with the horses' mouth as this can prevent the horse stumbling on uneven ground. The baqueano will always ride ahead to test the safety of the river. **If you are especially worried about any river crossing, speak to your guide and he will have a baqueano ride alongside you.**

In order to reach the camp or estancia in good time to relax before dinner, the guide will sometimes trot and/or canter for long periods. You will notice most of the baqueanos will also do a slow jog-trot which they find very comfortable to sit to. At times, your guide may follow this pace on the trail. Simply sit back in the saddle and keep your legs long in the stirrups and your seat deep in the saddle. Keep a fairly loose rein while keeping contact with the horse's mouth. Of course some horses are more comfortable to sit to than others – if you find your horse a bit bumpy, then you can rise to the trot or if you find the pace uncomfortable bring this to the attention of the guide who will adjust it accordingly.

*Please note that due to weather conditions or other conditions realized while on the trail, it may be necessary to adjust the itinerary in the concerns of safety or the well being of the riders. These changes are only made if not doing so would endanger the safety or enjoyment of the group. If you have any concerns at any time about the itinerary or any changes that are being carried out, or would like these to be explained to you in more detail, please speak to your guide and we will make sure and provide you with a detailed explanation on your return to our office in Puerto Natales.*

### General Safety Conditions:

We are under no liability whatsoever for any injury, damage, loss, vexation, distress, disappointment or inconvenience suffered by our clients unless and to the extent that this has been proved to have been caused by our negligence.

Once you start your trip, you cannot make any changes in the itinerary or disturb the dynamic of the group unless it is an emergency. In addition, you must comply with the instructions of the guide or/and his/her assistant. It is a condition of booking that you accept that the guide (supported by his team and the HRP office) is entitled to advise you on matters of safety or to refuse to allow you to ride or continue with your trip if for any reason, including your own inability, disruption of the group, behavior or health, they consider that you may endanger the safety or welfare of yourself, a member of staff, any other person involved in the trip or your horse. If so you will have no claim against us for compensation or refund.

**As stated above, if at any time while riding you are unhappy with your horse or the tack or feel unsafe or nervous for any reason, please bring this to the attention of the guide immediately. This will give him/her the opportunity to fix the problem and will ensure you and the rest of the group have a good and safe ride for the remainder of your trip.**

Have a great ride!!!

Sincerely, Horse Riding Patagonia