



THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE
NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND



GLOBETROTTING THROUGH NZ THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE

There is SO much goodness packed into this ride in the North Island of New Zealand. A point-to-point ride, it starts and ends at the family home of your guides, Nicola Megaw and her daughter Janey Harrison. River Valley Lodge is a spectacular, fifth generation family-owned lodge that sits poised on the wild Rangitikei River.

Thanks to the on-the-move nature of this ride, you'll traverse jaw-dropping, ever-changing scenery. Just imagine: dreamy canters across bowling green pastures dotted with flocks of happy sheep, getting lost in pristine native bush where the silver ferns tickle your horse's belly, loping across wispy pampas and swimming bareback in the river.

The absolute gift of an eight day ride is the flow that comes with consistent time in the saddle. You'll fall into a gentle rhythm with your horse, your fellow globetrotters and your guides, giving yourself the time to disconnect so that you can reconnect. Not only that, you'll get a lovely sense of the rural Kiwi way of life, with Nicola and Janey personally guiding you through generational farming properties that aren't accessible to the general public. You'll also be privileged to spend a night at a local Marae, which is the focal point of Māori communities.

For those Globetrotters who yearn for the rhythm and sense of accomplishment that comes with eight glorious days in the saddle – for those who hold a deep desire to return to mother nature, lift the veil on this enchanting part of New Zealand and be swathed in Māori culture – The River Valley Ride is for YOU.

It's a fire-cracker of an itinerary with an intense sense of freedom and adventure at its very core. **2**



GLOBETROTTING THROUGH NEW ZEALAND THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE FAST FACTS

HOURS IN THE SADDLE

On average, 4 to 6 hours daily. Please note, this is dependent on the pace of your group, so on some days it could take a little longer to reach your campsite.

BREED OF HORSES

A mix of Kaimanawa (NZ wild horse) and NZ Station Bred, which is a cross of Clydesdale, Standardbred, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and Arabian. There are also a few Tennessee Walking Horses and American Saddlebreds in the herd.

PACE

The pace varies from a walk right through to a canter when the terrain allows.

RIDING ABILITY

Suitable for intermediate to experienced riders. All riders MUST be confident riding outside an arena at all paces over uneven ground.

*Please keep in mind that this ride involves 8 days in the saddle, so suitable saddle fitness is a MUST.

WEIGHT LIMIT

Maximum of 95kg / 210lbs *please contact us for a further assessment if you're above this weight.

TYPE OF TACK

Both Australian stock saddles and Western tack are used.

*All horses are ridden barefoot and bitless.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation varies throughout the ride. While staying at River Valley Lodge (first two nights then last night), you'll enjoy comfortable twin share rooms with ensuites. You'll spend two nights 'glamping' (bell dome tents, camp stretcher and all bedding provided) and will have access to basic shower and toilet facilities. You'll also spend one night at a traditional Maori Marae (communal space, no single room available) and one night at Tarata Lodge with comfortable twin share rooms.

GROUP SIZE

A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 guests.

RIDE LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights (with 8 riding days).

SET DEPARTURES FOR 2021/22

December 7 to 14, 2021

January 25 to February 1, 2022

January 11 to 18, 2022

February 15 to 22, 2022

March 8 to 15, 2022

RATES FOR 2021/22 NZD RATE PER PERSON 8 DAYS, 7 NIGHTS

\$4,075 NZD per person twin share

\$4,575 NZD per person for single supplement

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

All accommodation, riding, meals (from lunch on day 1 through to lunch on day 8), and transfers to

and from Taupo on days 1 and 8.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

International and regional flights, travel insurance (compulsory), accommodation in Taupo the day before and after the ride and alcohol (BYO is welcome).

TRANSFER INFORMATION

Transfers to and from Taupo are included in the price (on days 1 and 8 only). The travel time each way is approximately 2 hours. Please refer to page 3 of this fact sheet for further information on when to arrive and depart.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment can only be made by credit card. There is a 2% surcharge on all credit card payments. Since you'll be paying in NZD, we believe paying via credit card is the most cost-effective and easiest option for you.

ABOUT YOUR GUIDES

You'll be hosted and guided by Nicola Megaw and her daughter Janey. Days in the saddle will be narrated with Nicola and Janey's in-depth knowledge of the land that you'll be traversing while drawing on the diversity and vibrance of their cultures. Nicola lives and breathes horses and is proud to have a string of naturally educated horses (many are Kaimanawa) who are blissfully happy bitless and barefoot.



TRANSFERS

Transfers to and from Taupo are included in the ride price. To avoid travel delays, we ask that all guests arrive and stay in Taupo (at your own expense) the day before the ride begins, so you're ready to be collected from your accommodation between 9 and 9:30am on day one. And please also book another night's accommodation in Taupo on the final day of your ride, so the group isn't rushed getting back into town. You can fly home the following day.

Being a tourist destination, Taupo has a vast number of accommodation options available to suit all budgets. We suggest staying near the town centre so you're within walking distance of plenty of restaurants. Here are a few hotels your hosts have suggested:

[Sails on the Lake](#)

[The Lake Motel](#)

[Hilton Lake Taupo](#) (not in the middle of town but has its own bar/restaurant and close to the thermal baths)

**Please note that if you're flying into Auckland International Airport, give yourself a three hour buffer to clear customs {especially with horse riding equipment - helmets, chaps} before your regional flight directly into Taupo. Our travel agent can assist in booking your international and regional flights as she's familiar with this ride itinerary.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY FOR 8 DAY, 7 NIGHT RIDE



*Please note, this is a suggested itinerary only and subject to change due to weather and other influencing factors.

DAY 1

Hooray! Your adventure in New Zealand is about to begin! This morning you'll be picked up from your accommodation in Taupo between 9 and 9.30am. The drive to River Valley Lodge takes in the unique Central Plateau of the North Island and you'll drive past three active volcanoes while travelling down the spectacular Desert Road. There will be a stop on the way to purchase any last-minute supplies, including extra alcohol if you would like. Your host, Nicola, will greet you at the Lodge. Over a scrumptious lunch, you'll meet your guides, who will give you a briefing on the days ahead. Today is about getting to know your horse, building a connection, feeling comfortable with one another and understanding the principles of riding your

horse in a rope halter. To begin with, once you've been paired with your horse, you'll spend some time working together on the ground; then you'll ride out over River Valley. After a beautiful afternoon of riding, you'll feel connected and confident in the saddle. In the evening, you'll enjoy a sumptuous dinner of home-grown meat and vegetables amidst the relaxed atmosphere of River Valley Lodge and get to know your guides and fellow guests. By now your comfortable, cosy bed will be calling - make sure you get plenty of beauty sleep tonight, globetrotters!

DAY 2

After packing your lunch and filling up on a hearty breakfast at the Lodge, everyone will head out to catch, groom, saddle and feed the horses. This hands-on time strengthens your relationship with your horse and will form part of each day (don't worry, there's always help on hand should you

need it). Mounting up, you will explore the big hills, open country and patches of native bush on Pukerimu Station, a neighbouring farm, with a lunch break in a charming spot along the trail. Tonight is your last night at River Valley Lodge before returning on day 5, so make the most of the luxury and be sure to savour the family-style, locally grown and home cooked fare! Before bed this evening, you'll pack what you need for camping, leaving anything you don't need at the lodge - it will be there when you return.

DAY 3

Getting into the morning rhythm, you'll pack your lunch, enjoy a filling breakfast, then prepare

your horse for the day ahead. Today's ride is a picturesque journey through the local farmlands, crossing seven private properties before reaching Moawhango, a small country settlement with a rich history. Here you will get to meet some of the locals from both European and Māori cultures, who will share their love of the land and their ancestral stories with you. Tonight you'll be given privilege of staying on the community's marae, or meeting ground {pictured}. The marae is the focal point of Māori communities throughout New Zealand, who see it as tūrangawaewae - their place to stand and belong. As a group, you will be welcomed onto the marae and experience the warm hospitality of the Māori people as you're treated to a delicious welcome meal prepared especially for you.

DAY 4

Today you will wave goodbye to Moawhango and journey on for an adventurous day's ride through the High Country. You'll ride across the magnificent hills of Maunganui and Ohinewairua Stations. This is private land where few tourists ever get to set foot, so lap it up, globetrotters! On top of that, you're riding right on the edge of wild horse country, where the wild Kaimanawa horses roam. If you're lucky, you might see a well-camouflaged herd among the tussocks! Finally, you'll pull your horse up at the campsite. After an evening dip in the river, it's time to settle in for

SUGGESTED ITINERARY FOR 8 DAY, 7 NIGHT RIDE



the night with another hearty meal courtesy of one of River Valley's legendary cooks. As the stars twinkle high above, you'll snuggle down inside your tent and rest up for another epic day in the saddle.

DAY 5

After breakfast at camp, you will saddle up and begin the journey back to River Valley, following an entirely new trail. Leaving Ohinewairua, you'll keep to the High Country while riding through a private farm aptly named Big Hill Station. With views out to the Kaimanawa and Ruahine Ranges, you'll feel on top of the world. In the far distance, you will see Aorangi (the local Maunga, which is Māori for mountain). Having spent a night at the marae, you'll understand more of its history and

significance. Tonight you will be sleeping under the Maunga, Aorangi, back in your cosy room at River Valley Lodge.

DAY 6

As usual, the day will begin with a delicious breakfast and time spent bonding with your trusty trail horse as you prepare for the ride ahead. The journey continues through the high country farmland of Pukeokahu and Pukekaka Stations, where there will be ample opportunities to pick up the pace and feel the wind in your hair. Then, after a picnic lunch, you'll descend into the beautiful Rangitikei River Gorge. This is a very special area for your guides, who grew up here and will no doubt have more than a few tales to tell. Your nimble horse will cross the river multiple

times en route to your destination, Tarata Lodge, a spectacular property owned by Steve and Trudi Maddock. The lodge is based high on the cliffs of the Rangitikei River and boasts stunning views into the river canyon. Dinner will be prepared by one of your amazing crew members while you and your fellow globetrotters sit back on the deck and watch the light fade softly over the river.

DAY 7

This morning you'll enjoy the delights of Tarata Lodge before riding down into the spectacular river gorge. Heading upstream, you'll ride through the river and up over two prominent hills, Pukekaka and Pukeokahu. Pukeokahu translates to 'hill of the hawk', and local Māori are believed to have roamed this sacred place for at least 400 years. On a clear day, the hilltop offers views of all three of the North Island's volcanoes! Finally, you will arrive back at River Valley for one last night together with your fellow riders and crew. You'll celebrate in true kiwi fashion with a Hāngī – a traditional Māori method of cooking food in the ground. Loosen your belt buckles, globetrotters!

DAY 8

It's your choice how you spend this last day of your holiday. We recommend a rafting trip with the fun-loving, knowledgeable river guides. You could also simply soak up the tranquillity by the river or, if you're not quite ready to say goodbye to your horse, you could learn a little more about horsemanship with Nicola. At 2pm, after one last picnic, you'll say farewell to the River Valley team and take a shuttle back to your accommodation in Taupo. The trip takes roughly two hours, so you will need to book a night's accommodation in Taupo this evening so the group isn't rushed getting back into town. You can depart for your onward travels anytime the following day.



1



3



4



2



WHAT OUR VALUED GLOBETROTTERS SAY ABOUT THIS RIDE . . .

1 “Wow, what a fantastic eight days we all had. Nicola and Janie are a fantastic team and the other two lovely guides who helped out every day were pretty special too. I felt so proud to be a New Zealander while on this trip. The land we rode over was spectacular, picturesque and at times very exciting, with some small challenges along the way. I always felt very welcome and cared for. I would recommend this trip to anyone – in fact, I would definitely do it again. The support and care our guides gave us was so heartwarming; it felt like we had become family over eight days.” **HEIDI COOPER**

2 “For me, this was a ride that exceeded my expectations, and I would love to be able to do it again. Every day was varied and surprising, whether we were riding through bushland, over hills and mountains, or crossing rivers. The meals were carefully prepared and very tasty, and the accommodations were better than I expected: good locations, and really nice places to spend the night. Everything was so well organised!” **MIEKE ABELS**

3 “This was a special holiday where our hosts went above and beyond to make the ride a success. Beautiful countryside with ample opportunity to go for a canter if you chose to. Riding through the rolling hills each day was something to remember and the eight days gave us a little extra time to relax and maximise our enjoyment. The night at the marae was special, and swimming with the horses was great.” **ANTHONY TIETZE**

4 “This experience was so warm with emotions. Having the guides and their friends share their land, their homes and their farms with us was the highlight of the trip. The horses were top of the line and very well cared for. The hospitality was also outstanding. The people who helped transport, feed and entertain us were the best. The guides’ level of knowledge of the environment was incredible.” **PATRICIA HARKNESS**

“ The River Valley Ride was truly one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Amazing horses, people and scenery – what more could you ask for? I rode Miss T... I loved her and it was sad to say goodbye. She was comfortable and easy. She also had a very forward-moving walk and was easy to push into a trot or canter. The accommodation was varied, but we always had a comfy warm bed, and sleeping at the marae was quite a special experience. Nicola and Tommy were the best. Always accommodating, they had fantastic knowledge of the environment and the land owners. We couldn’t have asked for two better guides. I loved every day and every minute. The whole experience was unforgettable.” **MICHELLE LAMPE**