

ÄVENTYRSRITT FAZENDAS BERGSOMRÅDEN

Ungefärligt program:
(med reservation för ändringar)



Itinerary

Day 01

Arrival at airport Florianópolis to catch our regular transfer to Urubici at 11am. Three hours scenic drive from sea level to the high sierra of Santa Catarina. Check-in at Urubici Park Hotel. Lunch is at a nearby Churrasco Grill Restaurant. Usually our clients wish to visit a leather and handicraft shop, where they can buy anything related to the horse and riding, at very reasonable prices. We recommend waterproof leather boots with rubber sole, beautiful gaúcho ponchos and hats, horsewhips and lassos from raw hide and much more.... Dinner and overnight.

The village of Urubici is a community of farmers and ranchers with an important production of meat, vegetables and fruits that is being exported all over the country. The region produces also apples (Gala and Fuji), plums and is the state biggest producer of vegetables. Mountain Rainbow Trout and *Mate Tea* are other products still, for which Urubici is known. There are no polluting industrial activities of any kind in the whole region! From November to May, on nearly every weekend, the region hosts regional, national and international rodeos and rope throwing competitions. These are very colorful events where visitors will see beautiful horses, top riders, displays of fine leather handicraft, local products, typical food and drinks, and after all, since we are in Brazil: plenty of good music and dances. To put it simple:

Urubici is rural Brazil at it's best:

NO URBAN VIOLENCE, NO DRUGS, NO CRIME !

Day 02

After breakfast colonial style including everything from rolls to pizza, from tarts to sausages and creams to juices, departure on horse back is set for 8am. Riding right through the town, soon the trail then leads along the lush green *Canoas* river valley surrounded by high canyon walls. A steep uphill ride, during which several breaks are recommended, the group arrives at the high fields that are characteristic for the region near *Urubici*. Here we may see, but hopefully not hear the sounds of the huge *siriema* bird, *Cariama cristata*, as its trumpeted cry advises bad weather ahead. They are also otherwise useful animals, since their preferred diet

is snakes! The *Quero-quero Vanellus chilensis* will watch us all the way and shy us off from its nest raising hell if we get too close. A typical southern Brazilian bird *Gralha azul*, Azure jay, *Cyanocorax caeruleus*, plays a significant role to prevent the extinction of the Parana pine *Araucaria angustifolia*. More difficult to watch is the highly endangered Red-tail amazon *Amazona pretrei*.

Having passed a small river called *Rio Capoeira* and *the Morro Azul* or Blue Mountain, the riders will lunch beside a little rapid that, a few meters ahead, forms into a beautiful waterfall, which because of the fine spray of the falls, is called *Cascata do Funil*. After an appropriate relax for horses and riders, the trail goes on through highland forest, covered mainly with shadowy *Parana pines* and the ever present *vassourinha* bushes that are used for firewood, broom, brushes, but also produces pollen for a delicious honey, that is even exported to Europe. Further ahead another stop to appreciate the Avencal waterfall, a 100m high cascade, one of the main attractions of the region.

The group reaches its first destination for overnight at *Vale da Neblina Inn*. Comfortable and cozy little lodges with a hot shower and private bath will be appreciated after a long riding day. A delicious *Entrevero* dinner is served at the facilities. Total riding time today 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ hs.

Day 03

After a solid breakfast, served to the chalets, the riders get on their horses to face a steep uphill trail, negotiated without problems by our tough mounts. On the way to the *Conta Dinheiro* ranch, today's destination, we pass a small family owned property known as *Novo Mundo* "New World". Arriving on top of the elevation a flat section not only provides magnificent views but also invites for canters and gallops. Not long and the group arrives at an abandoned ranch house, called *Pedra Branca*, because of a mountain that is one gigantic piece of a basaltic rock formation, already within the *São Joaquim National Parks* boundary. Here, beside a soft flushing creek and beneath an incredible old and huge weeping willow, we unsaddle and prepare our saddlebag lunch, which is normally a generous chunk of meat grilled over the open fire. There, also our brave horses find their share of delicacies. The siesta may not be too extensive as a long riding afternoon lays ahead. The terrain changes often now with steep up-and downhill riding. On their way the riders may very occasionally encounter a man or two who are collecting *Herba Mate* leaves for mate tea, a plant that grows here naturally. Towards the end of the day and after a long stretch of uphill riding the *Fazenda Conta Dinheiro* or money counting ranch, is finally reached. Both, riders and horses feel to have done a great job today. Whereas horses find rich pasture on the fields outside the ranch, Rosi awaits the group with a delicious caipirinha for relax. After shower, everybody enjoys her extraordinary cooking skills, although she always claims that she is at her best when working at her own oven, which is not the case here. One might wonder about the strange name of this working ranch. A story that will be told around after dinner, around the fireplace. Overnight. Total riding time 7 hs.

Day 04

The day begins early, with a hot *camargo* coffee, served right in the barn, where it is prepared with the fresh milk right out of the udder. Departure from *Conta Dinheiro* with destination *Cayamborá Canyons*. Heading first for the *Chapada da Macela* or *Macela* high sierra, a region named after a herbal plant, used in therapeutic teas and recommended as treatment for gastritis, stomach and other related diseases. So, if there are stress-plagued

riders with one or all of the above problems, remember, that our prices are all in. During October and November when the plant is in flower, the green of the high fields contrast with the bright yellow of Macela.

The trail leads past the *Fazenda do Baú*, a 2 century old ranchhouse, right on top of the *Morro do Gado Quebra* or crashing cattle mountain, with another story to be told at the right moment. On our way to the *Cayamborá Canyon* we pass the *Fazenda Salgado*, the former home of our host Zorro Elvio. While riding out the ridges at the canyons, breathtaking views, on clear days as far as to the coastline, distant some 200kms to the southwest, are offered to the riders. A churrasco, the Brazilian BBQ, lunch out of the saddle bag and coffee from the *polaca* tin will be enjoyed near a crystal clear freshwater creek, what would become, some 200kms to the west, the great Rio Uruguay. Shadowy *araucarias* invite for a nap, with the rich food and the murmuring stream doing the rest. Heading back to *Conta Dinheiro* on a different trail. This was a long riding day, with estimated 7 hs in the saddle.

Day 05

This day is dedicated to fun riding. We will canter over the rolling hills, not far from the *Conta Dinheiro* ranch and visit an old, wind worn cemetery. Stories about people who got lost in the mountains and were buried here will be making the round in the evenings. On a property belonging to Elvios sister, you will experience what you never though possible down here in Southern Brazil: riding through dense jungle of *Dicksonia*, giant ferns here called *xaxim*, and *bracatinga* trees. In sharp contrast, on top of the *Morro Careca* or bald mountain, 1700m, the riders enjoy magnificent views of 360° degrees. We will also visit friends at a neighboring ranch, enjoy their coffee and their chats. In the afternoon, when riding back to *Conta Dinheiro*, the group crosses open fields again offering great canters and gallops. The trail leads over high mountain ridges, where our horses proof that they are at home here. The region is also home of the mountain lion or puma, *Felis concolor*. There is time for a rest, before dinner is served. After dinner we welcome friends bringing along *gaita* and *violão*, delighting us with country music from the gaucho lands. While the flames blaze in the fireplace, Zorro Elvio will tell us how and why he loses frequently newborn calves and pigs to the puma. Overnight. Total riding time today is 5 hs.

Day 06

Another riding day lies ahead, for which we are well prepared after having enjoyed a decent farmers breakfast. The destination today is a region called *Cadet*, where we arrive after an 8 hs ride. On the way changing sceneries: from high mountain camps, pine and *bracatinga mimosa scabrella* forest, another tree producing bloom for superb wild honey that is exported to Europe and the US, to lower native vegetation like *Ilex paraguayensis*, also known as *Mate* tea and even raspberries, blackberries and delicious wild guavas can be collected on route. We will arrive at *Fazenda da Mena* in late afternoon. This *Fazenda* is, like *Conta Dinheiro*, another property that belongs to the huge family of Elvio and Rosi, our hosts. Relax, refreshments, shower, dinner. There might not be great desire for story telling tonight, since 8 hours in the saddle could demand its tribute. Overnight at the *Fazenda da Mena*.

Day 07

Easy riding from *Fazenda da Mena* to *Jararaca*. On route we visit the *Salto do Rio Lavatudo* waterfall, a river that forms, together with the *Rio Pelotas* the *Rio Uruguay*. Here, right at the falls, we will have a scenic lunch. Arriving at *Jararaca* we will unsaddle and leave the horses to graze on the rich pastures of our trail leader Elvio's property. We will then transfer a couple of minutes by car for check-in at *Fazenda Vale dos Rios*. This family farm is a simple but clean and cozy place, where you will feel right at home. Our hosts are Rogerio and Salete. Today's estimate is about 5 hs in the saddle.

Day 08

The *Jararaca* community is named after a snake *Bothrops jararaca*, a venomous pitviper, quite common in Southern Brazil. No reason to worry however. The snakes did not survive the transformation of the region into cattle country. As we did some tough riding the last couple of days, we thought to explore today the area around the property of Elvio and Rosi's new home, like the *Morro da Taipinha*. Although the riding time is not as long as on the other days, some parts of the area are dense forest, swamps and steep hills, but will be negotiated easily by our sturdy mounts and our trustworthy guide Zorro Elvio. On the top of the mountain, a beautiful panoramic spot offering great views of 360° degrees and as far as to the village of Urubici down below, has been selected for our siesta. Here a spring rises right out from between the stones. Extraordinarily delicious mineral water, that beats Perrier, Evian and other sophisticated brands hands down. We will be back at *Fazenda Vale dos Rio* early afternoon. The riding today will not exceed 6 hs.

Day 09

The last full day of riding fun will take us to the *Monte Alegre* mountain, claimed to be even higher than the *Morro da Igreja*, which is 1822m above sea level. To get to the *Monte Alegre* and back, the riders will face again dense forest, swamps, steep and rocky ascents and high camps with grassy hills, accessible on hidden trails that only a trained scout as Elvio can identify as such. A long days ride, but it is worthwhile the effort, mainly because of great adventure riding and an overwhelming mix of outstanding landscapes and views. Back at the fazenda, Salete has prepared some decent caipirinhas for apéritif and a fare well dinner for the last evening, with delicacies from the local cuisine. Elvio and Rosi of course will also be with us. After dinner everybody will join in on the large terrasse for some story telling and reflecting on the *São Joaquim Adventure Trail* that is coming to an end now. Today's estimate is 6 ½ hs riding time.

Day 10

Packing gear and getting ready for departure to Florianópolis. There is always enough time however to pay a visit to the nearby apple yards and the mysterious pre-historic stone wall carvings, unexplored and unexplained to this day. If not done so already on the arrival day, leather handicraft from saddle to boots, ponchos and hats, reins and other riding accessories can be purchased for reasonable prices in the local stores. We recommend to take a late afternoon flight out of Florianópolis.
End.