



THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE
NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND





GLOBETROTTING THROUGH NZ THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE

There is SO much goodness to our NEWEST ride in the North Island of New Zealand known as The River Valley Ride. As a circular point-to-point ride, you'll start and end at your guide, Nicola Megaw's family home: River Valley Lodge – a fifth generation family-owned lodge that sits poised on the wild Rangitikei River. With 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 horses belly, loping across wispy pampas and bareback swimming.

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 re-connect. Not only that, you'll get a lovely sense of Kiwi farming way-of-life with long-time local and host Nicola, personally guiding you through generational farming properties that aren't accessible to the general public. Another night you'll 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, and hold a deep desire to return to mother nature and to lift the veil on this enchanting part of New Zealand while being swathed in Maori culture, THEN - The River Valley Ride is for YOU. It's a fire-cracker of an itinerary with the feeling of freedom and adventure at its very core.



GLOBETROTTING THROUGH NEW ZEALAND THE RIVER VALLEY RIDE FAST FACTS

HOURS IN THE SADDLE

On average from 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 2020/21

December 12 to 19

January 16 to 23

February 6 to 13

March 20 to 27

RATES FOR 2020/21 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 (pictured above)

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 (majority are Kaimanawa) who are blissfully happy bit-less 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 at approximately 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 at 9.30am and driven to River Valley Lodge. Your host, Nicola, has lived in River Valley her whole life, and her family has been running the business for five generations. Along the way you'll have the chance to purchase any last minute supplies, and alcohol if you'd like. Once you reach the stables, you'll meet your guides, be introduced to the horse that will be your partner for the next week, and get a briefing on the trip 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, you'll spend some time working together on the ground, then you'll ride out over River Valley. After a beautiful day's riding, you'll feel connected and confident in the saddle. Over a sumptuous dinner of home-grown meat and vegetables, you'll enjoy 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 your trip each day (don't worry, there's always help on hand should you need it). Mounting up, you will explore the beautiful countryside around River Valley for a full

day, with a lunch break in a beautiful spot along the trail. Crossing Pukerimu Station, you'll ride some big hills and patches of native bush. Tonight you'll savour more family-style, locally grown and home cooked fare, al fresco if the weather permits. Before bed this evening, you'll pack what you need for camping for the next 4 days, leaving anything you don't need at the lodge - it will be there when you return on day 7.

DAY 3

Getting into the morning rhythm, you'll pack your lunch and 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. Moawhango is a small country settlement with a rich history. Here you will get to meet some of the locals from both European and Maori cultures, who will share their love of the land and their ancestral stories with you. Tonight you will be staying on the community's marae {pictured}, or meeting ground. 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 officially welcomed onto the marae and experience the warm hospitality of the Maori people as you're treated to a hearty Maori meal.

DAY 4

This morning you will wave goodbye to Moawhango and journey on for an adventurous day's ride through the high country. You'll cross Maunganui Station, as well as two more farms. 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 county, where the wild Kaimanawa horses roam. Finally, you'll pull up at your first campsite and untack and turn out your horse. Then you'll settle in beneath the magnificent volcano, Mount Ruapehu, for another feast 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.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY FOR 8 DAY, 7 NIGHT RIDE



DAY 5

After breakfast, you will saddle up and ride out for the day to the Shangri La, a private piece of land on Makokomiko Station. This land is owned and farmed by Maori people and it is a huge honour to be permitted to ride here. Your journey takes you through picture-perfect farmland with views out to the Kaimanawa and Ruahine Ranges, and swathes of young Manuka bushes planted by the Maori people, who have invested in their property for future generations to produce the unique honey that comes from the bees that pollinate these native plants. And if you're tempted, here is your chance to swim your horse in the beautiful Rangitikei River! Relaxing on the banks, you'll eat lunch and (hopefully!) laze in the sunshine. On



your return to camp, you'll find that the locals have been preparing a feast: a traditional Hangi. You'll get to see what's involved in 'putting down' the Hangi, watch it being lifted out of the ground, and then relish the incomparable flavours.

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 for the first part of the day over high country farmland, where there will be ample opportunities to give your horse its head and feel the wind in your hair. Then, after a picnic lunch, you'll descend into the beautiful Rangitikei River Gorge. Nimble crossing the river, your horse will find a trail through the long grass on the opposite



bank. 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 destination tonight is Tarata Lodge, a spectacular property owned by Steve and Trudi Maddock. Based high on the cliffs of the Rangitikei River, it boasts stunning views over the water. Dinner will be prepared by one of your amazing crew members, and enjoyed out on the deck as the light fades softly over the gorge.



DAY 7

Today gets off to an easy start as you enjoy the delights of Tarata Lodge, before saddling up and riding back down into the spectacular river gorge. Heading upstream, you'll ride through the river and up over two magnificent hills, Pukekaka and Pukeokahu. Pukeokahu translates to 'hill of the hawk', and you're more than likely to spot one or two as you clamber up its exhilarating slopes. This sacred place is believed to have been a play area for local Maori for at least 400 years. On a clear day, the hilltop offers views of all of the North Island's volcanos! Finally, you'll arrive back at River Valley for one last night together with your fellow riders and crew. Plenty of laughs, stories and memories will no doubt be shared!

DAY 8

Today will be a day to explore the bond you've made with your horse, or if you would prefer, take a trip on the river with the rafting guides! Your day concludes with a picnic to celebrate the journey you've undertaken, and at 2:00pm 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'll 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.



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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**