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SPRING TRAVEL

Giddyap!

Five trips to get you into the saddle.



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There are many good reasons to spend your vacation atop a horse, as these five trips demonstrate. You can visit hard-to-reach spots, like hidden canyons or coastal jungles. You can learn new skills, such as how to post or, if you dare, gallop. You can return to the clip-clop pace of yesteryear. You can bond with spouses and kids or, at the very least, your new four-hoofed friend. You can even cross an item off your bucket list, whether it's riding through surf, playing cowboy – or just getting on a horse.

Riding in luxury

A former turnip farm turned plush resort in the not-so-distant shadow of Vermont's Killington Ski Resort, **The Mountain Top Inn & Resort** is one of the few spots in New England where you can take a vacation astride a horse. The equestrian center, open May through October, provides classes and rides in Western or English styles for all levels, even pony rides for preschoolers and cross-country jumping for more accomplished horse types. A 12-mile trail skirts the waters of the Chittenden Reservoir and

then plunges into the Green Mountain National Forest. You can bring your own horse and house pets. The equestrian center is open to non-guests.

The Mountain Top Inn & Resort, Chittenden, Vermont; <http://www.mountaintopinn.com>; 802-483-2311; three-night riding package, including six hours of guided trail rides, breakfast, and lodging, \$1,150 per person; hourlong group rides, \$45 per person, riders must be 8 years or older; hourlong private lesson, \$65 per person, no age restriction

The Big Island on horseback

Hawaii is not short on horses, but you'll be hard pressed to find a ranch with accommodations. **Equitrekking** of PBS fame solves that problem with this package that combines a four-night stay at the oceanfront Hilton Waikoloa Village resort, car rental, and three different rides from the resort. One day you'll pick your way through the knotty jungle terrain of the coastal Waipi'o Valley, which is ringed by lush cliffs and waterfalls. Your other rides will be on cattle ranches teeming with Hawaiian cowboy culture – one features open fields and views of the Pacific Ocean, the other a rain forest. The package is aimed at intermediate to advanced riders, but beginners can also partake. Riders must be 8 years or older; maximum weight is 230 pounds.

Equitrekking, Waikoloa Village, Hawaii; <http://www.equitrekkingtravel.com>; 877-490-7786; rates for the four-night package start at \$971 per person