Tips To Enjoy Your Ride

Organized trail rides can be a relaxing way to meet other riders and enjoy the natural beauty of Maryland’s open space, scenic horse farms, woods and park land.

Here are some basic guidelines to help prepare you for your ride.

1 Select a stable licensed by the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB). These stables have met the State’s standards of care for horses and consumers. However, MHIB can only guarantee that the stables listed are licensed by the State of Maryland and have met these standards. MHIB is listing these stables as a courtesy to the consumer and stable and, does not, however, in any way whatsoever, endorse any particular stable or guarantee its services.

2 What To Wear. Always wear an equestrian helmet. Keep your cell phone in an ankle, belt or arm strap. Keep the cell phone on YOU—and not the horse. Protect your legs with long pants. If possible, wear boots or hard shoes with a heel for safety.

3 Before The Ride. Listen carefully to the instructions of your ride leader. Establish clear expectations with the leader. Let them know your level of riding experience. How fast do they plan on going? How long do they plan to ride? Plan to ride in single file. Get to know your horse. Give him a friendly pat.

4 During The Ride. Keep the length of one horse between you and the horse in front. Stay behind the ride leader. Ride leaders should check with riders periodically to be sure they are comfortable at the pace. Try to keep all horses together and to keep up with the group. If you are the last horse, don’t hold back so that you can catch up at a faster pace. This could cause horses in front to spook.

5 Trail Courtesy. Watch your step. Tread gently when the trails are muddy; footprints, bicycle ruts and hoof prints can damage the trails. Help others. Look and listen. Stay on marked trails. If you need to pass another horse, ask permission from the rider in front of you and pass to the left.

6 After the Ride. Thank your ride leader. Give them feedback that might be helpful. Also give your horse a friendly word and let him know how much enjoyment he gave you. In the event you visit a facility that you believe is substandard in care and safety, please contact MHIB with your concerns.

7 Maintain the trails. If you come to enjoy trail riding, get to know the stable owner and/or join a trail riding group. Help maintain trails. Schedule a work day with your local group or parks agency, or sign up to join a “friends” group that maintains trails where you like to ride.

To learn more:
Maryland Horse Industry Board
mda.maryland.gov/horseboard
Maryland Horse Council mdhorsecouncil.org
The Equiery equiery.com
Trail Riders of Today (TROT) trot-md.org
Maryland Department of Natural Resources dnr2.maryland.gov

Directory to Trail Riding Stables & Guided Trail Rides in Maryland
See Maryland from Horseback!
35 Licensed Trail Riding Stables—located in 16 counties from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore

Maryland Horse Industry Board
Maryland Department of Agriculture
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

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