



## TRIP IDEAS

# GUEST RANCHES IN THE CARIBOO CHILCOTIN COAST

BC guest ranches and dude ranches offer everything from five-star pampering to hay rides, from Thai massage to pitching in with the chores. And there's riding for all skill levels too, with gentle mounts for beginners and, at some ranches, a rare chance for experienced riders to take to the hills and trails without a guide.

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### Siwash Lake Guest Ranch

At Siwash Lake Ranch, ride, hike, mountain bike, canoe and fish (catch and release of course). Or help with land stewardship, wildlife tracking and wilderness survival projects – this is Canada's greenest dude ranch.

Siwash Lake, a luxurious, off-the-grid working ranch run with the smallest possible footprint, was awarded the highest possible Five Key Rating by the Hotel Association of Canada's (HAC) Green Key Eco-Rating Program. The ranch is also certified Gold by Green Tourism Canada. It is all about minimal impact, from line-drying laundry to using solar power – not that roughing it is ever part of the equation. As one of, at most, 24 guests, enjoy organic, locally grown food, private lake view balconies, and crackling wood fires in the antique-furnished great room.

### The Hills Health Ranch

At the Hills Health Ranch, located near 108 Mile Ranch, ride or hike across thousands of acres of Cariboo rangeland, relax with a massage or a facial and then head out for a hay ride. This is a down-home kind of place, and has been one of BC's favourite family friendly spa getaways since 1983.

After hiking, aerobics, morning walks and trail rides, relax in the indoor pool, hot tub or sauna, or book the signature treatment: a rosehip oil wrap using healing herbs grown on the ranch.

### The Flying U Guest Ranch

Saddle up at the Flying U Guest Ranch, a wonderfully rustic ranch near 70 Mile

House. This guest ranch, which is complete with an 1880s saloon and museum of cowboy history, has been in the ranching business since the 1860s. Food is simple but hearty, log cabins are old school (think hand-crafted furniture and a shared bathhouse) and the nearest thing to a spa is a sauna and a dip in Green Lake.

The Flying U is also one of the few ranches where guests can ride unaccompanied through the surrounding trails, lakeshore and pastures. The horses know the way home. In the evenings, gussy up for a hoedown at the Longhorn Saloon or an old western flick playing at the ranch's Black Horse movie house.

### Echo Valley Ranch and Spa

Indulge in a Thai massage or a pedicure before slipping into riding boots at Echo Valley Ranch and Spa near Clinton. Ride wilderness trails through the high country, then, back at the ranch, take a dip in the indoor pool, soak weary riding muscles in a mountain view hot tub, and learn about ruesri-dat-ton, an ancient Thai exercise technique similar to yoga. Dinner? The chef adds a whole new meaning to home cooking, with organic, locally raised food eaten family style in the ranch house.

### Transportation

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast is vast, but the ranches are, on average, about a five-hour drive from Vancouver or an hour from Kamloops Airport. In a rush to relax? Echo Valley, the Flying U and The Hills Health Ranch can help arrange private charters directly to their own airstrips.