

Summary of Mathilda Barr's Presentation on Aug. 19, 2024

- It isn't essential to have horse riding experience before going to Cavalcade, as those skills will be taught and can be adequately learned at Philmont.
- It's not your butt that will be sore, it will be your thighs, hips and knees.
- Crew dynamics and attitude are really important, so the crew should camp together or do other crew bonding activities beforehand.
- There's often afternoon rain and thunderstorms, so to avoid riding in the rain the crew needs to be on the trail by 8 and arrive at its destination by early afternoon.
- How early the crew gets up in the morning depends on how long the crew takes to get going - a slow crew will need to get up at 4 am.
- Philmont is very strict about not weighing more than 200 lbs - that includes your clothes, but you can remove your boots and belt when being weighed.
- Philmont is very strict about being able to mount your horse without assistance, not even using a step stool, so do stretching and flexibility exercises beforehand so your left knee can rise well above your waist and your left leg easily flexes to the side, plus leg strength exercises.
- The cargo carried by the horses has to be evenly distributed, so if you are bringing your own tent instead of using Philmont's, the tent should come paired with a second tent of the same weight.
- A Cavalcade trek is just as hard if not harder than a backpacking trek at Philmont - you'll be saddling and unsaddling your own horse without assistance, lifting heavy bags onto the pack horses, and moving bales of hay - staff doesn't do that for you.
- Don't bring a cowboy hat - you'll be wearing a helmet when riding, and you aren't allowed to wear a hat or anything else under the helmet (use lots of sunscreen).
- No padding is allowed between you and the saddle.
- The shoes you bring for wearing in camp need to be sturdy because you'll also be wearing them for side hikes.
- Mathilda recommends Wrangler Cowboy Cut jeans, around \$27.
- Ariat is a popular make of riding boot and is what Mathilda wears - ariat.com.
- Boot Barn is a chain with a good selection of boots - the closest store appears to be in San Dimas.
- Jim's Western Wear in San Fernando is closer, but it has a smaller selection of boots.
- While Philmont has an outdoors store, it doesn't sell riding boots, so you must bring riding boots with you.
- It's important to have a good quality rain jacket and rain pants, not something easily torn like Frogg Toggs.
- Bring lots of socks so you don't get trench foot.
- Our crew of 15 will have a Horseman who is in charge, a Wrangler assisting, and three pack horses.
- One other crew will be starting the same day that we start - we won't be on the same itinerary as them, but they will be in the South with us, and we will be with them at the beginning and end of the trek, and we may cross paths halfway through, depending on itineraries.
- While Philmont hosts 2,000 backpacking crews each summer, they host only 24 Cavalcade crews - 12 crews in the South on 6 dates with 2 crews per day, and 12 crews in the North on 6 dates (different from the South's dates) with 2 crews per day.