

PREPARING YOUR HORSE FOR “ISLAND ADVENTURES”

The fun and adventures on Catalina are about to begin, but before you load up your horse for that barge ride to the island, make sure to take a few simple steps to ensure they have as much fun as we do!

First, begin transitioning your horse to an alfalfa diet approximately 2 weeks before the ride. Alfalfa is the primary feed on the island and other choices may be slim or unavailable. A slow transition (i.e. 2 weeks) will allow your horse to become accustomed to the hay *before* the added excitement of the ride. Also be sure to address your horses' feet during this time and make sure he/she is properly shod.

Next, make sure your horse is “trail fit”. Most days' rides will vary from a few hours to nearly all day (with rest periods!). The terrain is quite hilly with some trails being more demanding than others. Cactus is abundant, so use caution when venturing off trails. Horses should be able to “tolerate” being behind trail leaders. Also remember that buffalo live wild on the island, and they may appear at any time and should not be bothered or harassed in any way. Give them a wide berth when near them.

Tack should fit well and be comfortable for both the horse and rider. Common sense should be observed when riding in the water, especially if you go into the bay for a full swim with your horse. Martingales or draw reins should NOT be used when swimming.

Finally, horses are tied to a picket line during rest periods and at the end of each day. Horses should be comfortable being tied for long periods of time, and ideally, get along with neighbors. The wranglers are professionals and really do take great care of our “babies”.

I look forward to seeing all of you and your horses!

Christi Garfinkel, DVM