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Continental Divide Trail Ride Cost Analysis

Our Continental Divide Trail Progressive Pack Trip is priced in the higher range than some other comparable trips. I will explain a bit about why our trip costs what it does.

First of all, we offer the best ride with the best stock with the best guides anywhere in the world. We really believe that. We also believe that you get what you pay for albeit there are some exceptional trips out there for bottom dollar.

We consider this a 9 day trip because the first day we have to move all of our stock and equipment as well as our people and the guests to the trailhead, which is about 75 miles from our ranch. Our rate for a progressive trip is \$350/person/day X 9 days = \$3150.

To give you an idea what it costs to run a trip of this nature for 4 people, I will outline some of the costs:

While we do go as light as possible, we take the best of care of our livestock as well as our guests and we believe in eating well. Consequently, we will restock our supplies midway through the trip.

For a 4 person trip, we will need a crew of 2 wranglers and a chef for a total of 7 people on the trail. This will require 7 riding horses and at least 7-9 pack animals for a total of 14-16 animals.

When we go to the trailhead, we have to take two trucks and trailers to transport the animals, which requires two additional wranglers/drivers. We have to spend the night at the trailhead, which means that the two drivers are there for two days.

It also takes two wranglers to meet us at the midpoint for a resupply. They also stay overnight at the camp, which is another two days.

When we are picked up at Wolf Creek Pass, once again it requires two drivers to pick us up, this time for only one day.

We pay our employees an average of \$150-\$175/day which comes out to \$200-\$225/day with payroll taxes, workers comp etc.

Thus our total number of employee days is:

3 Wranglers X 9 Days = 18 Days
2 Drivers/Wranglers X 5 Days = 10 Days

Total Days = 28 days
Total Labor Costs = 28 X \$200 = \$5600 (probably a low estimate)

Food costs \$20/person/day.

Trail food cost is 7 people X \$20/person/day X 9 days = \$1260.
Driver/resupply food cost is 2 people X \$20/person/day X 5 days = \$200

Total food costs = \$1460

Fuel/mileage costs:

The Cunningham trailhead is 75 miles each way for a total of 150 miles.
The resupply trailhead is 85 miles each way for a total of 170 miles.
The Wolf Creek pickup point is 90 miles each way for a total of 180 miles.
Total miles = 500 (also a low estimate)

With the cost of fuel and today's vehicles, it is probably a low estimate of \$1.00/mile for on the road costs.

Thus mileage costs are approximately \$500.

Animal costs:

Trail use: 14 horses X 9 days = 126 animal days
Resupply: 6 horses X 2 days = 12 animal days
Total animal days = 138 days

When we use our horses for a packing service, we charge \$150/animal/day. However, if we allocate only \$10/day/animal, the total animal costs are:

Total animal use costs: 138 days X \$10/day = \$1380 (a very low estimate)

Additionally, we grain our horses, which costs approximately \$0.5/day (closer to \$1.00/day)
Animal food costs = 138 X \$0.50= \$70

Total animal costs = \$1450

Thus, the total direct costs for running this trip is:

Labor costs	\$5600
Food costs	\$1460
Travel costs	\$500
Animal costs	\$1450

Total	= \$9010

Keep in mind that this DOES NOT INCLUDE other business costs that are incurred over the year such as liability insurance, advertising, animal veterinary costs, ranch costs, license fees (we are a licensed outfitter in Colorado), forest service use fees (3%), etc.

We charge \$3150/person for a total of \$12600 for four people.

Thus, our net profit is \$3590 or approx \$400/day.

So, you see that we have a 28% markup (not including indirect business costs). In the big business world, this would be considered small.

This is why that I believe that when you see a progressive pack trip for \$250-\$300/day, they must be cutting corners somewhere or are content taking you into the woods for the experience.

This is probably way more information than you wanted, but hopefully, you will understand why a good, high quality pack trip such as we offer costs as much as it does.