

Try a Trail Trial

If you're looking to spice up your trail rides, show off your partnership with your horse or enjoy a little competition, trail trials, or "judged pleasure rides," just might be for you.

Trail trials are judged trail rides, usually five to 10 miles in length with five to 12 judged obstacles. The obstacles include natural hazards, such as water crossings and walking over logs, as well as urban hazards, which may include things like a family having a picnic or a group of teens playing soccer in a meadow. A judge is stationed at each obstacle to evaluate how well the horse and rider negotiate it. Calmness and safety are emphasized. Trail trials are not races, and while there may be a time limit on each obstacle so that you don't hold up the riders behind you, the ride itself is not timed. Contestants usually compete against the scores of other riders in their age range or ability level. Riders ride by themselves or in small groups. Contact your local breed association or riding club to find trail trials in your area.