



SADDLETRAVEL.COM

Tuscany's Via Francigena

7 days/ 6 nights/5 days riding

Max weight 90kg

Airport: Pisa or Florence



Riding along the Via Francigena is like stepping back in time. From the saddle, you'll trace the footsteps of ancient pilgrims, following winding trails through olive groves, vineyards, and medieval hilltop villages that seem untouched by the centuries. The pace of horseback travel brings you closer to the spirit of this historic route—unhurried, mindful, and deeply connected to the land.

Since the early Middle Ages, the Via Francigena has guided travellers from across Europe to Rome, crossing some of Tuscany's most culturally and environmentally rich landscapes. Today,

you'll experience it as those early pilgrims once did—on horseback—accompanied by well-trained, responsive horses carefully schooled by your host, Sergio, and chosen for their surefootedness and gentle nature.

Riding

The route known today as the Via Francigena follows the journey taken by Archbishop Sigeric in the year 990, as he travelled 1,800 km from Rome back to Canterbury after meeting Pope John XV. Over the centuries, countless pilgrims, merchants, and soldiers have followed these ancient tracks, adapting the route to the seasons, the weather, and the needs of their journeys.

On this trail, you'll experience a section of this historic trail on horseback - just as many travellers once did. Each day offers between four and six hours in the saddle, winding through rolling hills, vineyards, olive groves, and medieval hamlets that seem frozen in time. The terrain varies from gentle open fields to forest paths and hilltop ridges, giving you plenty of opportunities for relaxed canters and long, scenic trots.

Your guide, Sergio, knows every stretch of the route and every horse personally. He carefully adjusts the pace and distance each day to suit the group's experience and the horses' comfort. The horses - responsive, surefooted, and well-schooled - make it easy to relax and enjoy the rhythm of the ride.

Rider requirements

This trail is best suited to riders with at least an intermediate level of experience. You should feel confident and in control riding in open terrain at walk, trot and canter. A good level of current riding fitness is important, as you'll spend around four to six hours in the saddle each day exploring the Tuscan countryside.

Guides & group size

Your host and guide for this holiday is Sergio, an experienced horseman with a deep knowledge of the Tuscan landscape and its rich history. His passion for both horses and heritage brings the Via Francigena to life, sharing stories and insights that make each day in the saddle truly memorable.

Group sizes are kept small (between 2 and 6 riders) to ensure a personal and relaxed experience. The maximum rider weight is 90 kg.

Accommodation & Dining

You'll be staying at the Agriturismo La Selva, an ancient and typical Tuscan farmhouse. La Selva offers welcoming and comfortable rooms and apartments, all with private bathrooms, towels, hairdryers and WiFi. After returning from a day of riding on horseback, there is no better way to relax than a dip in the on-site outdoor swimming pool or kick back in the serene garden with a book.

This is a fully inclusive holiday with all meals provided. Dinners are at La Selva and lunches on the trail are usually at local vineyards. You'll enjoy delicious Italian cuisine and have the chance to taste the local wines.



Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrival in Tuscany

Arrive at the ranch and settle into your accommodation. In the evening, enjoy your first dinner with your hosts and fellow riders. Your guide, Sergio, will outline the week's riding program and answer any questions as you prepare for the adventure ahead.

Day 2 – Ride to Monteriggioni

After breakfast, meet at the stables around 9:30 a.m. and set out on your first day in the saddle. The trail crosses the Pian del Lago plain—once a vast marsh known as Lake Verano, reclaimed in the 18th century under Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo. Following the Via Francigena, you'll pass Castello della Chiocciola, with its distinctive spiral tower, before reaching the medieval fortress of Monteriggioni, built between 1214 and 1219. After lunch, continue to Abbadia a Isola, once an "island abbey" surrounded by the old lake's marshes, and then on to Castel Pietraio, your stop for the night.

Day 3 – Ride to San Gimignano

Set off from your overnight stop and ride towards the San Gimignano area, in the heart of the Val d'Elsa—a stunning region between Siena and Florence. Its roots trace back to the Etruscan era, but it was the Via Francigena that later transformed the Val d'Elsa into a thriving hub of culture and trade. You'll follow peaceful country tracks and sections of the ancient pilgrimage route, stopping for lunch along the way—just as medieval travellers once did.

Day 4 – Ride through the Montagnola Senese

Today's route explores the Montagnola Senese, one of southern Tuscany's most fascinating natural areas. This hilly region, with gentle elevations of 500–600 metres, has been inhabited since Etruscan and Roman times yet still retains much of its wild beauty. Along the way, you'll pass the ruins of the Romanesque Nagli Chapel, the fortified village of Marmoraia with its ancient parish church, and the charming Borgo di Scorgiano, before returning to your accommodation.

Day 5 – Return to the Equestrian Centre

Today's ride follows new trails through the Montagnola Senese as you make your way back towards the equestrian centre. For a time, you'll leave the medieval atmosphere of the Via Francigena and step into more recent history, reaching Casa Giubileo on Montemaggio. This

peaceful spot bears the memory of a tragic event from March 28, 1944, when it became the scene of one of the most moving episodes in Tuscany's struggle for liberation during the Second World War. Here you'll stop for lunch and, for those who wish, visit the Rooms of Memory before continuing your final ride back to the ranch.

Day 6 – Ride to the Hermitages and Wine Tasting

Today's trail follows the Via Francigena toward the Hermitage of Lecceto, originally built between 1189 and 1223, later rebuilt in 1317 and expanded in 1344. Continuing on, you'll visit the Hermitage of San Leonardo al Lago, home to a community of hermits recorded as early as 1112, and likely even older. Along the way, you'll pass La Piramide, an obelisk commemorating the reclamation of Pian del Lago.

After a lunch stop at the fortified village of La Villa, an official rest point on the ancient pilgrimage route, you'll ride back to the equestrian centre, leaving the Castello della Chiocciola behind you. The adventure concludes in true Tuscan style—with an afternoon wine tasting featuring local varieties

Day 7 – Departure

Enjoy a final breakfast at the ranch before saying goodbye to your hosts and fellow riders. Transfer to the airport for your onward journey, carrying with you lasting memories of your time riding through Tuscany and along the Via Francigena.

Climate

The climate in this region of Tuscany is typically mild and Mediterranean, with long, warm summers and pleasant spring and autumn seasons—ideal for horseback travel. From April to October, daytime temperatures usually range between 20°C and 30°C, while evenings can be cooler, especially in the hillier areas of the Montagnola Senese. Rainfall is infrequent during summer but more common in spring and autumn, when the countryside is at its most vibrant and green. Light, breathable layers and sun protection are recommended for the warmer months, while a light jacket is useful for cooler evenings and early morning rides.



Transfers and flights

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please plan your flights to/from as follows:

You should fly to either Florence or Pisa airport, the transfer service is available at anytime, check-in is from 4pm. Alternatively you can hire a car or take the train to Siena where train station transfers are complimentary. For your departure flight on the final day please book a flight after midday.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and

Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Italy for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements.

Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & tipping

The local currency in Italy is the Euro. Your holiday is fully inclusive and we recommend not to bring too much cash with you, just enough if you wish to buy drinks outside of mealtimes or souvenirs etc.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion.

Riding declaration

"I am an experienced rider and able to mount & dismount unaided. I have a firm seat and I'm confident and in control at all paces over rough terrain (including rising trot, light seat canters and gallops) and have a good level of current riding fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others."

Booking conditions

You are booking with the riding holiday operator, these are their booking conditions:

1. By booking a trail, each participant confirms that he/she is an experienced rider, comfortable riding at walk, trot and canter in open spaces. The trail organiser may, at its discretion, refuse to allow a participant to ride should it consider a participant to be below the required standard of riding ability.
2. All participants undertake to ride in a manner that is safe and respectful towards the horses and other participants on the trail. The trail organiser may, at its discretion, refuse to allow a participant to ride should it consider a participant to be riding in a manner that is unsafe.
3. Riding helmets are not mandatory but are recommended. Any participant that decides to

ride without a helmet does so fully at his/her own risk.

4. All participants must comply with a strict weight limit of 90kg. The trail organiser may, at its discretion, refuse to allow a participant to ride should he/she surpass this weight limit.

5. All participants must have in place a valid insurance policy (travel or otherwise) that covers them for horse riding abroad.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms

saddletravel.com

Holidays are confirmed with a 20% non-refundable deposit.

The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50%

28 days or more - 30%

less than 28 days - nil

Travel insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.



Contact details

+44 1497 888 228 WhatsApp

trails@saddletravel.com

saddletravel.com

27 Old Gloucester Street,
London,
WC1N 3AX

CN: 05411320

<https://saddletravel.com>