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Brigands Trail

Weight limit: 100kg

Nearest airport: Rome

8 days / 7 nights / 5 riding days



This riding holiday in Tuscany will give you the opportunity to explore the charm of this region, crossing vast, unspoiled territory without restrictions. Riding through beautiful nature, lakes, villages, castles, palaces and archeological sites, your guides will lead you along old trails used by the “Brigands” (outlaws) to escape from the law 200 years ago. The castle offers a perfect location for an authentic country holiday in the south of Tuscany, where you can explore neighbouring historic towns of Orvieto, Sorano, Pitigliano and Bolsena.

The Riding

This trail consists of 4 half day rides and one full day ride; however the riding can be tailored to suit individual requirements and abilities. Please note you need to be confident to canter in open spaces on this trail.

During July and August it is too hot to run the full day trail, so instead a half day trail will be offered with a massage at the wellness centre.

Guides & Group sizes

Group sizes are between 1-6 riders. Groups are separated based on ability.

Horses and Tack

The horses are a mixture of thoroughbreds, warmblood crosses and ponies, ridden in English tack.

Level of riding and fitness

You need to be happy and confident in walk, trot and canter. This trail is not suitable for beginner or novice riders.

Accommodation & Dining

The breathtakingly splendid 17th century castle, Castello di Santa Cristina, has been the property of the noble Caterini family for generations. It is located in Southern Tuscany half way between Orvieto and Siena, closely bordering with the regions of Umbria and Tuscany and one and a half hours away from Rome.

The castle's 18th Century ivy-covered farmhouse and out-buildings have been



carefully restored over the past ten years to retain their authenticity. Now they offer fantastic accommodation, in 8 self-catering cottages and 14 private bedrooms. All rooms are furnished with original pieces and offer you the chance to enjoy a unique holiday in Italy.

The ground floor of the farm house opens onto the main terrace which overlooks the swimming pool. On the ground floor there is a large “taverna” with brick vaulted ceilings. The space is divided into three main areas: dining room, billiard room, ping-pong room, plus a large kitchen available for all the guests and equipped for cooking courses.

There is also a wellness centre onsite providing a range of holistic and Ayurvedic treatments with a qualified physiotherapist.

Itinerary

Day 1

After a check-in and welcome drink, you'll meet the guides during dinner for an introduction and programme briefing before enjoying a guided tour of the Castle.

Day 2

Half day ride of 18km. After breakfast you will ride towards the hills framing the west plateau on which the castle is situated. This is a fantastic spot for a breathtaking view of the area; from the beautiful crater of Lake Bolsena to the hills surrounding lake Mezzano.

Day 3

Today you will ride through farmland on the Brigands Path into the wooded hills which surround Onano. Take a glimpse of the pine trees atop an ancient Etruscan site as you arrive on the flat plane of the Mezzano crater. Stop for lunch at the Fra Viaco farm restaurant, where you can take a refreshing swim in the crystal clear waters of the lake.

After a delicious meal, you will ascend through ancient chestnut woods to arrive back at the castle.

Day 4

Free day from riding. The local area is full of interesting archaeological and historical sites, including the village fortresses of Pitigliano, Sorano and Sovano. It is definitely worth visiting the marvellous Italian gothic church of Orvieto - Civita di Bagnoregio, known as the ‘Dying Town’. Alternatively you can choose to relax at the castle and take advantage of the swimming pool, tennis court, indoor and outdoor games. Have a massage, take a cooking class or hire a bicycle to explore the area.

Day 5

Half day ride. Today you will be heading out along The Brigands Trail towards the picturesque Lake Bolsena. This is a fantastic spot with breathtaking views of the area stretching from the beautiful crater of Lake Bolsena on one side, to the hills surrounding Lake Mezzano on the other side. On a clear day you can see the sea 40 km away, shimmering like a mirror. As you head back along this ancient 'outlaws highway' you will pass through mature oak woodlands dotted with original farm dwellings built in the traditional tufo rock.

Day 6

Half Day Ride 20 km. Once again this morning you will set off on the Brigands path, heading north through the hills towards Onano, a fortified village with a medieval castle which was the stronghold of the Monaldeschi family who ruled this area during the Middle Ages. At the Madonna delle grazie church you will follow the track north through enchanting countryside back to the castle.

Day 7

Half day ride 16km. Following an old Etruscan trail, you will ride up through thick woods to the top of the crater surrounding lake Bolsena. Here, you will enjoy remarkable scenery including vineyards, Etruscan tombs, the prominent volcanic lake and the panorama dominated by the famous Farnese palace in Gradoli; a wedding gift made by the Pope in 1500 for his nephew. What a present!

You will return to the castle riding through the vineyards, vegetable gardens and enchanting woods. In particular, you will enjoy a canter across a tunnel made by oak trees above an old shepherd's path.

Day 8

Having had many amazing experiences and exhilarating adventures, you will prepare for your onward journey taking with you many happy memories. Checkout is usually between 10am-12pm, although a late checkout can be arranged subject to availability.



Price includes

- Accommodation
- All meals including wine
- Riding - 4 half day rides and 1 full day ride
- Guided tour of the castle

Not included

- Flights
- Transfers
- Additional activities
- Treatments

What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

Please use the packing list as a guideline, bearing in mind the time of year you are riding.

- Your own well-fitted hard hat
- Comfortable jodhpurs or riding trousers
- Riding / hiking boots with good grip
- Chaps
- Riding gloves
- Long sleeved T-shirts to protect against the sun
- Warm layer such as fleece or woollen jumper for cool evenings
- Water- and windproof coat
- Buff / bandana to protect against the sun and dust
- Comfortable clothes for the evening
- Lightweight shoes for after riding
- Sun cream & lip balm
- Sunglasses & sunhat
- Swimwear
- Plug adapter
- Copy of your travel insurance
- Personal medication



Climate

Tuscany is located in central Italy where the summers are typically hot with plenty of sunshine. The hottest months are July and August when the daytime temperatures can sometimes reach up to 40°C. Spring and autumn are generally mild with mostly good weather. Temperatures during the day can vary between 15°C to 25°C. The annual precipitation is fairly low with most rainfall during the months from September to April.

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>

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 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. Credit cards are accepted if you wish to book a massage or any of the onsite services such as a cooking course or bicycle hire.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion.



Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms

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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%

30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

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.

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