



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## Tuscany - Chianti Rides 2019

### Riding Trip Information Sheet

These rides explore the Chianti area of Tuscany, between Florence and Siena, a region that fulfils all expectations of typical Tuscan countryside with rolling hills, vineyards, olive groves, traditional country villas, impressive castles and hilltop towns. The rides are based from the comfortable farmhouse, Rendola, home of your English host, Jenny Bawtree who has lived in Tuscany for many years and is an experienced, enthusiastic and extremely knowledgeable guide. The rides are a good mix of riding and sightseeing and an excellent introduction to rural Tuscany, with Jenny's years of experience as a guide ensuring you see several of the hidden delights of the region that tourists usually miss. For those who have more time to spend, a ride from Rendola can easily be combined with a few extra days visiting Arezzo, Siena or Florence or a little further afield, Rome, San Gimignano, Montepulciano or Assisi.



**Dates** For 2019 various 7 night ride itineraries and 4 night short breaks are scheduled from set dates between April and June, and September to October (see dates overleaf). Programmes are based at Rendola with riding out most days combined with guided sightseeing that may be geared towards those with particular interests - NEW for 2019 is the Riding & Dining Tuscan, for those who enjoy relaxed riding with plenty of sightseeing. The Riding & Frescoes week is ideal for riding art-lovers, combining half-day rides with time to visit frescoes in Florence, Siena, San Gimignano and Arezzo; Family Weeks combine riding with sightseeing in Florence and Siena, organised to appeal to younger riders; Non-riders are welcome to join most programmes on request and additional activities such as guided walks and cooking classes can also usually be organised by prior request. Other dates for stays at Rendola can sometimes be arranged on request during the spring or autumn season (generally 7 nights but shorter stays sometimes possible). Please contact Ride World Wide to discuss your requirements and possible dates.

**The Horses** There are about 18 horses at Rendola, mainly crosses of local Italian breeds such as Sicilian, Maremmani, with several Arab crosses and a few pure Arabs. They are of a medium build and average between about 14.2hh and 16hh. They are all well schooled and a responsive, enjoyable ride and there is a good selection of horses for riders of all levels including several that are good mounts for confident children over 10 years. Tack is English style with suede 'seat savers' and saddlebags provided if required. There is a strict rider weight limit of 13st 10lbs / 87 kgs.

**Riding** The route and number of hours riding each day varies with the itinerary chosen, but there is generally between 2 ½ and 5 hours riding a day. On all programmes nights are spent at Rendola with riding out from there each day so the amount of riding can usually be adjusted to suit. Jenny and her BHS qualified instructor Eraldo will also give basic lessons to less experienced riders if required, although any changes to the set programme and the availability of lessons will depend on their guiding commitments and also the requirements of the rest of the group. Ride itineraries are fairly relaxed and on most, half the day is riding with other activities on offer the rest of the time. The 7 night programmes all include one full day of sightseeing (or shopping!), a break from riding. Where there are full day rides (about 5 hours), these are broken up with a stop for a leisurely picnic lunch. Rides are led by Jenny herself who is an experienced, careful guide and teacher and is also extremely knowledgeable about the local area, or by Eraldo also an experienced guide who speaks good English. Horses are looked after, tacked up and prepared for you at Rendola. A mobile telephone is carried for emergencies when riding. Rides are usually limited to a maximum of 10 guests.



**Pace** The pace of the rides is tailored to suit riders' ability. Overall it is moderate but also fairly gentle and relaxed. The aim of the rides is to enjoy the scenery and to get to know some of the more off-the-beaten track parts of the Chianti in an unhurried way from the back of a good horse, rather than fast or challenging riding. The routes chosen take you from village to village across country, following dirt tracks through woods and skirting small fields and vineyards. There will be several opportunities to trot and canter each day, although usually in fairly short stretches as you are often on winding, undulating tracks around vineyards and small fields. There is some roadwork each day in the vicinity of local villages, but this is kept to a minimum. You will usually be encouraged to ride one behind the other, particularly when you are following narrow tracks and when trotting and cantering.

**Riding Experience** The rides are aimed at intermediate riders and above but some confident novice riders can also be accepted. You need to be reasonably riding fit as you will ride for several hours on most days. Participants on all rides should have some previous riding experience and be secure at a walk, trot and for short periods of steady canter. Jenny is an experienced and careful guide who enjoys riding with experienced riders but also looks after the less confident very well. Children with suitable previous riding experience, aged 10 years and over are welcome. If you are a novice rider please discuss your ability with us before booking.

**Non-riders** There is plenty to do and see in the area around Rendola for those not wishing to ride and non-riding companions can join most programmes. Train connections from Montevarchi are good (Florence, Assisi, Perugia, Cortona, Arezzo and Orvieto all easily accessible) but we recommend non-riders hire a car for added flexibility. Walking with a guide through the surrounding countryside, perhaps meeting up with riders for a picnic can sometimes be arranged; cooking classes are usually possible on request; Jenny is very knowledgeable about the local area and will always help, suggesting places to see and ideas for outings and day trips; for keen shoppers, the Prada factory outlet, with plenty of bargains, is close by.

**Terrain** The rides explore the Chianti region, starting at the small hamlet of Rendola, which is about 5 kms from the town of Montevarchi, south east of Florence and north east of Siena. You will ride into the 'Chianti Classico' region to the southwest of Montevarchi following tracks around olive groves, vineyards and fields of crops, and riding along narrow paths that wind through wooded river valleys. Some routes climb up into the Chianti hills, which rise to a height of 2500 feet, and cross a few of the small rivers and streams that flow into the Arno valley. On most routes there is some roadwork in the vicinity of small villages and farms but this is kept to a minimum and is usually on quiet country roads and through picturesque country villages.

**Accommodation** Accommodation is either at Rendola, a traditional Tuscan farmhouse in the hamlet of the same name, or, on some nights, in other similar farmhouses and local hotels. The house Rendola, which is Jenny's home, is a traditional two storey stone farmhouse. It is full of character, typical of the area, rustic and homely - very much a home rather than a hotel but relaxed and comfortable. On the ground floor is a large beamed dining room where meals are eaten at a long oak table. An outside stone staircase leads to the first floor sitting room where there is an open fireplace, sofa, chairs and a good selection of books (wifi / internet access is also available). Off this, also on the first floor, are the guest bedrooms. These are of varying sizes, painted in fresh pastel colours with terracotta tiled floors and each has a small adjoining tiled bathroom with loo and shower. The house is at the top of a hill, a short walk from the hamlet of Rendola and is surrounded by olive groves with lovely views over the Arno valley. Behind it, a short distance away, is a large stable yard where the horses are kept. There is also a sand school tucked in amongst the olive groves and numerous animals including dogs, a goat, chickens and ducks wandering freely around the house and garden! The atmosphere is informal and relaxed - you will immediately feel at home. Accommodation on moving rides when not at Rendola, is at other similar farmhouses belonging to friends of your host (bathrooms may be shared in some of these) and at local hotels chosen as far as possible for their character. One night of the Riding & Frescoes week is spent away from Rendola and your hotel is carefully chosen for its character and position for sightseeing, museum visits and shopping and is usually (availability allowing) a charming 'residenza d'epoca' in San Gimignano. Rates on all trips are based on shared rooms (see price details below for information about sharing / single rooms).



**Meals** You will be well fed on these rides. At Rendola meals are all freshly produced by Jenny's cook, Franca, of Sicilian origin (or occasionally local chef Sergio) - both experts at many local dishes. Breakfast is simple in the Italian style - generally cereal or perhaps yoghurt, bread or toast and tea or coffee; lunch is either a three course picnic out riding - menus might include a rice and smoked salmon salad, salami and cheeses followed by a home-made tart or bruschetta, barbecued chicken and mini pizzas cooked on the fire, with 'ricciarelli' or grape cake, a speciality of the area, to finish. Or might be a rocket and parmesan salad, home-made pasta dish and dessert eaten at Rendola. Dinner is also three courses - often a risotto or home-made pasta to start, then a main meat dish with vegetables followed by fresh fruit or cheese for pudding. Local table wine (usually red but white on request) and coffee are included with lunch and dinner, there are different Italian liqueurs to try and squash is freely available. If you wish to try some of the area's other wines, Jenny will be happy to supply these for you to buy at cost and the guest fridge is also kept supplied with beer and a selection of soft drinks to buy at cost. Meals and drinks are not usually included when eating at restaurants away from Rendola (eg on day visits, and in San Gimignano on the Riding & Frescoes itinerary).

**Weather** The best time to visit this part of Tuscany to ride is between April and June and in September and October. In spring there are many wild flowers including numerous orchids and fields of poppies and the acacia and fruit trees are in blossom. In autumn the area is drier and less green, but full of golden colour with the spectacular changing leaves. Daytime temperatures in May and June are generally about 23 to 28 degrees C and very pleasant for riding. July and August can be very hot so rides are generally not run at this time. September and October are cooler and are generally good months to visit. It can rain all year but rain (usually showers or short sharp thunderstorms) is most likely over the winter from November to March.

**What to bring** We will send you a list suggesting what to bring when you make your booking.

**Itineraries** Itineraries are based at Rendola with riding out from there on most days. The ‘Riding & Frescoes’ itinerary includes morning rides and afternoon visits to nearby sites of interest, with one night spent in San Gimignano. The ‘Riding & Dining Tuscan’ includes 3 morning rides and two full day rides during the week with visits to churches, towns and wine tasting. Family weeks are similar to the Discover Tuscany programme and include a full day in Florence, and a half day visit to perhaps Siena or another site of interest. Arrangements each day will always vary a bit according to the time of year, weather and also the number and experience of riders in the group. An example of the Discover Tuscany itinerary is set out below (please note that it is only examples and arrangements may be varied by your guide at her discretion if the weather or other local conditions require). Please contact us for other itineraries.



### **Discover Tuscany Ride - Example itinerary**

**Day 1** Arrive in Florence and meet your host Jenny or her son Nicholas at Florence train station (Firenze Santa Maria Novella) at 17.45. A forty-minute train journey to Montevarchi where you are met and driven about ten minutes by minivan to Rendola, the 400-year-old typically Tuscan farmhouse home of your hosts. Settle in and enjoy a glass of Chianti Classico in the garden or sitting room before dinner. Night at Rendola. (D).

**Day 2** Breakfast and morning ride (approximately 2 ½ hours) through vineyards, olive-groves and woodland, passing close to a 11th century tower and a 14th century church. Return to Rendola for lunch at about 1pm. After a short siesta and possibly a guided walk to introduce you to the local flora and fauna, you can join in Jenny’s light-hearted introduction to the Italian language, or have a look through her extensive library of books on all aspects of Italy. For dinner a choice of genuine Italian pizzas cooked in a wood oven, followed by one of Franca's delicious desserts. Night at Rendola. (B,L,D).

**Day 3** Breakfast and morning ride (approximately 2 ½ hours) in the wooded hills north of Rendola, scattered with traditional farmhouses. After lunch a trip to the ancient city of Arezzo and a guided visit to the unusual and fascinating frescoes of Piero della Francesca and to the main square made famous by the film “Life is Beautiful”. A chance, too, to do some shopping before returning to Rendola for dinner and night. (B,L,D).





**Day 4** Day ride with picnic in the Chianti hills (about 5 hours riding) south of the stables, passing the medieval village of San Leolino, a lake and the castles of Cennina and Lupinari. Dinner and night at Rendola. (B,L,D).

**Day 5** A free day to make your own arrangements for sightseeing, perhaps to visit Florence, Assisi, Cortona or Orvieto - your choice! All are an easy train ride from Montevarchi and you will be driven to and from Montevarchi station. Alternatively there could be a wine-tasting visit arranged to Montepulciano and Montalcino (minimum 4 people), to be paid for on site. Dinner and night for all at Rendola. Dinner and night at Rendola. (B,D)

**Day 6** **Either** a morning ride **OR** a guided visit to Montevarchi and its famous weekly market. Lunch at a gourmet but typical Tuscan trattoria in Loro Ciuffenna, a medieval village built around a ravine on the other side of the Arno valley, then an afternoon ride of about 2 hours or a lesson in the school. Dinner and night at Rendola. (B,L,D).

**Day 7** A final day ride (about 5 hours), to the top of the Chianti hills (nearly 2,500 feet) behind Rendola. A barbecue lunch outside a boarhunters' hut on the ridge and ride back to Rendola via a village with a castle, Montegonzi. A farewell dinner and night at Rendola. (B,L,D).

**Day 8** Breakfast and then a ten-minute drive to Montevarchi to meet the train back to Florence. Own arrangements for your onward journey from Florence. (If you prefer you can make your own arrangements to take the train from Montevarchi to another destination such as Assisi, Perugia, Arezzo, Orvieto or there is a direct train to Rome from Montevarchi which takes 3 hours). (B).



**DATES 2019:**

**Discover Tuscany Ride:** 6th to 13th April 18th to 25th May  
27th April to 4th May 28th September to 5th October

**Riding & Dining Tuscan:** 8th to 15th May 9th to 16th October  
25th May to 1st June

**Taste of Tuscany Ride:** 1st to 5th June 21st to 25th September

**Riding & Frescoes:** 30th March to 6th April 19th to 26th October

**Family Week:** 17th to 24th April

**RATES 2019**

**Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.**

**Discover Tuscany** - Euros 1565 per person

**Riding & Dining Tuscan** - Euros 1565 per person

**A Taste of Tuscany Ride** - Euros 845 per person

**Riding & Frescoes** - Euros 1515 per person

**Family Week** - Euros 1240 per person

**Children (10 to 15 years) Discover Tuscany Ride** - Euros 1250;

**Family Week** - Euros 995; **Taste of Tuscany** - Euros 680

**Non-Riders** - Discover Tuscany - Euros 1275; Riding & Frescoes - Euros 1215;

**Family Week** - Euros 995; **Taste of Tuscany** - Euros 720

Rates **INCLUDE** 7 nights (6 nights on Riding & Frescos as accommodation in San Gimignano is not included; 4 nights Taste of Tuscany) twin accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, all meals at Rendola (excludes lunches & dinners when out eg visiting Siena, Florence, San Gimignano), guided sightseeing within itinerary, house wine with meals / picnics at Rendola, and return transfers from / to Florence on first and last days at set times with the group by train and minivan.

Rates **EXCLUDE** international flights / travel to Florence and taxes, meals when not at Rendola (eg when sightseeing in Siena, Florence & San Gimignano), 'premium' wines and extra drinks (beer, spirits, soft drinks etc other than squash) at Rendola, all wine and your bar bill at restaurants / hotels throughout, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), supplements for a single room, any visa fees, personal extras such as shopping, museum / monument entrances, additional non-included activities and train tickets for excursions, and any tips you may wish to leave.

**Single travellers** Please note that rates quoted above assume shared accommodation.

**If you are travelling alone and would like a single room** we will do our best to arrange one for you on payment of a single supplement, although room availability will depend on when you book and also on the number and mix of guests in the group and **cannot** be guaranteed. Hotel rooms in Siena have to be reserved a long way in advance and additional single rooms may not be available at the time of booking. Also the availability of single rooms at Rendola depends on the number / mix in the group. Any available singles will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Supplements to book a single room (if available) are:

Euros 150 for Discover Tuscany, Riding & Dining Tuscan, Riding & Frescoes, Family Week;

Euros 100 for 4 night Taste of Tuscany.

**If you are travelling alone and are happy to share a room with another guest**, please tell us - we will do our best to find you a sharer so that no supplement is payable. However, on the Castle Ride, if there is no-one to share with, a supplement will be charged for the nights in Siena.

**Travel** The meeting point for all rides is Florence station **outside the snack bar at the head of platform 16** at 17.45 (sharp). The station is about 15 minutes by taxi from Florence airport. There are direct flights to Florence with British Airways from London City, Gatwick and Luton airport (operated by Vueling). Florence airport is about 4kms from the city centre with good public transport. An express shuttle - "Vola in Bus" - runs between airport and Railway Station, which is in the centre of town. Alternatively you can fly to Pisa or Bologna and take a bus / coach or train to Florence. British Airways, Alitalia, Ryan Air, Easyjet and some other 'budget' airlines have direct flights to Pisa and / or Bologna from London and / or regional airports. There is a good, regular coach service between Pisa airport and Florence train station, with departures every 20 minutes, taking about 1 ¼ hours, cost about 12 Euros return; see: <https://www.autostradale.it>

There is also a train station at Pisa Airport and it is about 1 ½ hours by train to Florence, usually changing at Pisa Centrale. Bologna is about an hour on a fast train to Florence, plus ½ an hour to transfer from the airport to train station in Bologna. If you require help booking flights or a quote please call us, or you can often get good deals with the 'budget' airlines booking on-line. For further information on trains and train times we suggest you look at the Rail Europe website [www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk) or the Italian rail website - [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com).

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

**Visas** If you hold a full British passport you do not need a visa for visits to Italy.

**Health** No vaccinations are required by EEC residents to enter Italy. If you have a particular condition requiring special medical treatment, in case of emergencies you should carry a letter from your own doctor translated into Italian describing your condition and the medicine / treatment required. Chemists in Italy ('farmacia') will be qualified to give advice on minor ailments and to dispense prescriptions.

(DRAFT 07/02/19)

