



RIDE WORLD WIDE

ITALY

TUSCANY & LAZIO 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides explore the district south of Siena in Tuscany and the borders of the neighbouring provinces of Lazio and Umbria. This area is in the heart of Etruria, once one of the main centres for the Etruscan population, also famed for its wine production. The rides are organised with an experienced local operator, Andres Besson (also known as Duska) who has been guiding rides in this region for many years. He is professional but an easy going and relaxed riding companion. Duska and his back up assistant make an efficient, fun and friendly team who will look after you very well - although with limited help, you should not expect the service and polish that some of our other rides offer. Accommodation each night is at comfortable local guesthouses and village hotels all of which have been chosen for their atmosphere and hospitality. Food is a highlight at many of the places you stay, the rides are excellent value and a wonderful, unique way to get to know this genuine, unspoilt part of rural Tuscany.



DATES

6 and 7 night 'progressive' itineraries are run from set dates, riding from village to village. Both begin at the hamlet of Sovana with the first day of riding to Proceno. The Etruscan Ride then heads south west to explore the Etruscan tombs at Vulci, while the Ridges of Siena Ride heads north to Radificano fort and the iconic Val d'Orcia. Please see the set dates overleaf and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.

HORSES

The horses used for these rides are owned by Duska and are mainly local Italian saddlebreds crossed with various other breeds - Sicilian, Appaloosa, Andalucian, Arab. They are a medium build, between 15hh and 16hh, extremely well looked after and a responsive, forward going and enjoyable ride. They are sensible to handle, calm with traffic and surefooted but also fit and generally of a fairly lively temperament, so suit confident and reasonably experienced riders.

TACK

Tack is English style, with leather or Wintec (or similar) general purpose saddles which are comfortable, although well used (don't expect tack to be gleaming!). Most of the horses are ridden in snaffles. Saddle blankets have large pockets with room for a water bottle, light raincoat, suncream etc.



RIDING

Itineraries include 5 or 6 days riding with about 5 to 6 hours in the saddle each day. Duska takes great care of his horses and prepares and tacks them up for you each morning - some help with untacking etc at the end of the day is appreciated. Duska leads rides personally and when changing accommodation at night your baggage will be transported to the next night's hotel by back up vehicle. A vehicle also meets the riding group at lunchtime. Rides are usually run for a minimum of 4 people and groups are limited to a maximum of 7 or 8, although occasionally up to 10, guests.

WEIGHT LIMIT

80 kgs / 12st 8lbs (clothed) but this does depend on riding experience and fitness. If you are close to this please call us to discuss and to check that a suitable horse is available.



PACE

The pace of the rides is moderate overall, with good opportunities to trot and canter most days, although the pace will vary from day to day and will be limited by the terrain. Most of the faster riding is on the chalky white dirt tracks that criss-cross through this part of Italy. These offer firm, in places quite hard, but safe going that the horses are used to. There are also good opportunities to trot and canter when the going is flat and open, for instance when you cross agricultural land and ride through vineyards. There are some steep climbs and, as you ride through hilly, wooded country and along narrow winding paths (old Etruscan trails) that can be stony, or on areas where the ground is uneven or where there may be holes, the pace will necessarily be slow at times.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

All rides are for reasonably experienced, fit and confident riders who enjoy (and can manage) an energetic riding pace. As there is limited help, you should be able to mount a horse without assistance, be confident on and around horses and comfortable, relaxed and secure in the saddle at all paces from a walk to a fast canter. Also, as some of the ground is uneven, you should have an independent and balanced seat. There is no jumping on the rides, but some experience over low jumps is an advantage that you will find helps when riding over uneven terrain and up and down small hills. You should also be reasonably riding fit with a fairly good level of general fitness as there can be long periods of trot and canter. If you do not ride regularly at home we recommend you do so in the months and weeks before you go to get used to the hours you will spend in the saddle.



TERRAIN

Much of the riding is on the old Etruscan roads, a network of 'white' dirt tracks that used to link the old settlements and are now used by occasional farm vehicles. You may also ride through forest, along wooded tracks, across gentle grass covered clay hills, up and down steeper hills with rocky canyons and along narrow, stony paths and around vineyards. On some days you head across fairly open agricultural land with gentle undulating hills and good views across the valleys. There is some tarmac work every day, crossing roads, riding through local villages and in the vicinity of your hotels - most roads are very quiet but you occasionally have to cross busier roads. You may be asked to get off from time to time to lead the horses over rough or stony ground.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is in carefully chosen traditional country or farm guesthouses ('agriturismos'). Bedrooms, all of which are different and may be in small 'apartments' with a separate sitting area / kitchenette, are simple and traditionally furnished with wrought iron or wood framed beds, usually twin or doubles (in some cases rooms have a double bed and one or two single beds), terracotta tiled floors, bed side table and wardrobe. They have a private bathroom with loo and shower and, although simple, are all reasonably comfortable. There are swimming pools at most of the places you stay. On both itineraries two nights are spent at the castle in Proceno, a 12th century fortress which has been converted into a guesthouse owned by a charming lady whose family have lived in the castle for three centuries. The castle is wonderfully situated in the centre of the medieval hilltop town with views across the town and surrounding countryside. It is historic and characterful - what it lacks in light and modern facilities, it makes up for in its position and history. Rates are based on twin share rooms but single rooms can usually be arranged on request for a supplement (although the number of available singles may be limited).



MEALS

As expected in Italy food is a highlight and you will be well fed! Breakfast each day is served at your hotel or guest house and is simple in the Italian style - generally bread, butter and jam, brioche or a sweet cake, ham & cheese, yoghurt, fruit with tea or coffee. Lunches are simple picnics, eaten at a table set up in the countryside when you are out riding - there might be a pasta or rice dish, with fresh bread, locally produced cheeses, salamis, home preserved olives and / or a salad, with fruit and coffee to finish. Dinner on all rides is either at your hotel or at a local restaurant. At restaurants, dinner is usually four courses - typically you might start with something like crostini with mushrooms, olives or fresh tomatoes, or perhaps a plate of antipasta - delicious locally produced salamis and hams. There is then usually a pasta course, with different varieties of homemade pasta or perhaps a typical pasta and bean soup and this is followed by a main meat dish which might include wild boar, rabbit, guinea fowl or other game. Fresh fruit or a traditional cake, pudding or cheese will be offered to end the meal. Local wines, water and coffee are included with dinner.



WEATHER

Rides are run from March to October, except in August when it is usually too hot. The climate in early spring is generally mild, although March can still be cold with daytime temperatures about 5 to 10C and nights sometimes dropping below freezing. By early April, it is usually very pleasant, around 15C or sometimes a little warmer in the day. Daytime temperatures in May / June are usually in the mid 20s C and this is a lovely time for riding with wildflowers, poppies and sunflowers at their best in June. July and August are expected to be hot, with temperatures into the 30s C on some days, although there is often a cooling breeze. Nights are usually pleasant at around 15C. In September & October it is usually around 20C in the day, with all the colours of the harvest, fruit ripening and mushrooms growing. It can rain at anytime - more likely in spring and autumn, but even then rarely persistent.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.



ITINERARIES

The following is an example of the Ridges of Siena itinerary - please enquire for the Etruscan Ride itinerary. Please note that this is only an example and the route and day by day arrangements may be varied, or run in reverse, at your guide's discretion if the weather or other local conditions or circumstances require.

Example Itinerary - Ridges of Siena Ride

Day 1 - Own arrangements to make your way to Sovana (transfers can be arranged on request and for an extra charge, either from Rome airport which takes about 2 hours, or from Orvieto train station, about an hour's drive). Meet your guide for a welcome dinner. Night at the hotel in Sovana. (D)

Day 2 - Breakfast and a short drive (about 10 mins) to meet the horses. After horses are allocated and everyone is comfortable, set off riding towards Proceno following an ancient and scenic route. Stop for a picnic at Castell'Ottieri, a medieval citadel with a beautiful roman church (San Rocco). In the afternoon ride on, crossing from Tuscany into the region of Lazio, to arrive at Proceno in the late afternoon. The night at the ancient castle, which has a swimming pool and lovely views over the town, with the horses in a field close by. Dinner and night Castello di Proceno. (B,L,D)



Day 3 - Breakfast and the journey continues with spectacular views as you ride in the direction of Radicofani, a beautiful hilltop village with a fortress close by. After 3 to 4 hours' riding, cross back into Tuscany again and enter the province of Siena, known for its yellow hills and Cyprus trees. The route takes you up and down hills, across rivers and along ridges, the Crete Senese, where there are wonderful 360° views. Stop for a picnic lunch with a view dominated by the still distant Radicofani, with its fortress that was unassailable during the battles between the Duchy of Tuscany and the Pontifical state. In the late afternoon finally arrive at Radicofani, passing Celle sul Rigo (a small medieval village where you may stop for an ice cream) and head to Agriturismo Sterposi where Antonello, your host tonight, awaits with a delicious dinner (perhaps boar that he has hunted and pasta freshly made by his wife). (B,L,D)

Day 4 - A shorter day today setting off at around 10:00. First cross the village of Radicofani and then descend through typical Sienese hills and ride through the forest, before climbing the hill towards the fortress of Radicofani from where there is a 360° view of the famous 'Val D'Orcia'. Stop here for a picnic lunch. In the afternoon a ride of about an hour takes you back to your lodgings and there will be time to visit Radicofani on foot, or to relax and swim in the pool. Dinner and night Agriturismo Sterposi. (B,L,D)



ITINERARY cont.

Day 5 - Today's ride heads back by a different route through the Crete Senese, up and down gentle hills, past wheat fields and a reservoir. Carrying on downhill, you pass several abandoned farmhouses and fields to reach the border of Lazio and Tuscany in Cetona, close to the Via Francigena. Stop for lunch on the banks of the River Paglia where there may be a chance for a swim! Then after lunch, the final part of the route heads uphill again, taking you back to Proceno. Dinner is usually in the restaurant below the castle walls, close to the swimming pool and surrounded by lovely gardens. Overnight at Castello di Proceno. (B,L,D)



Day 6 - The final days ride takes you back to Sovana, heading first in the direction of **San Quirico** and passing the tiny farming town of Prato Lungo. Lunch is a picnic in Vitozza (the Archaeological park Città del Tufo, an Etruscan necropolis where there are 200 caves to visit, the remains of a Roman church and of an ancient fortress). After lunch continue riding alongside the river through ancient forest until you arrive close to Sorano, a magnificent village built on a cliff. Let the horses drink from the Lente River then follow an old Etruscan road through a gorge with views of Sorano. Climbing to the plateau there is time for a last canter back to the field where the horses stay. After untacking and turning the horses out for a well-deserved rest, a short drive back to the hotel in Sovana. A farewell dinner in the village and night at Sovana (B,L,D).



Day 7 - Breakfast and onward travel (transfers can be arranged on request to Orvieto or Rome). (B)

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.

Ridges of Siena (6 nights) - 1750 Euros per person

Single supplement 250 Euros

17th to 23rd March

24th to 30th March

14th to 20th April

19th to 25th May

16th to 22nd June

7th to 13th July

14th to 20th July

1st to 7th September

15th to 21st September

20th to 26th October

Etruscan Ride (7 nights) - 1920 Euros per person

Single supplement 300 Euros

5th to 12th May

26th May to 2nd June

9th to 16th June

23rd to 30th June

21st to 28th July

22nd to 29th September

6th to 13th October

Rates **INCLUDE** 6 or 7 nights twin shared accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, back up vehicle and support, meals (dinner first day to breakfast last day), and local wine and mineral water with lunch and dinner. Rates **EXCLUDE** international flights to Italy and taxes, transfers between your arrival / departing airport and Sovana (the start / end point of the ride), 'premium' (label) wines, and extra drinks whilst riding, personal medical / travel insurance (which all riders must have), supplements for a single room, any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave.

PLEASE NOTE that rates generally assume a minimum of 4 riders on each trip and rides may not be confirmed until we have at least 4 riders booked. Please call to check numbers / discuss

Single supplements - Please also note that if you book alone, you will need to pay the supplement for a single room. This will be charged on ALL single bookings. However if you are prepared to share a twin room with another rider (of the same sex) please let us know and we will do our best to find a sharer. If we find someone willing to share, the supplement will be refunded. We cannot guarantee finding a sharer as it depends on another guest wishing to share a room.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The closest international airport to Sovana, the meeting point, is Rome's Fiumicino airport, with the smaller Rome Ciampino also an easy drive of around 2 hours. There are several daily flights between London and Rome - British Airways and Al Italia fly to Rome Fiumicino airport; Easy Jet and Ryan Air fly from London and regional UK airports to Rome Ciampino airport. British Airways also fly daily to from London to Pisa (about 3 ½ hours drive from Sovana) and Easy Jet and Ryan Air have flights to Pisa from several regional airports.

Transfers from Rome to Sovana Private transfers by taxi from Rome or Orvieto to Sovana can be arranged on request. Charges for these are payable locally - the cost Orvieto/Sovana is usually 120 Euros each way (per vehicle taking 2 - 3 passengers); and for Rome to Sovana around 200 to 300 Euros each way. Please let us know if you would like a taxi organised and we will confirm cost on booking - if you are travelling alone we will see if there are others to share with. (NB 4 or more travelling together will usually require more than one car; transfer prices are subject to change at any time to reflect third party charges and fuel costs).

The train service in Italy is generally very good and there are regular trains from Rome to Orvieto. The fast trains take about an hour. For further information on local trains and train times we suggest you try International Rail (<https://www.internationalrail.com/> on 0871 231 0790) or look at the Italian train website which is usually very good - www.trenitalia.com. (N.B. When booking a train to Orvieto please don't book the extra funicular service to the centre of Orvieto as meeting is at the mainline station, at the foot of the walled city. Also make sure you ask for and take careful note of the end destination of your train as departure boards at Rome station may not list all station stops individually!)

It's also possible to hire a car and drive yourself to Sovana. We can supply directions, which are quite straightforward from Rome. Your car can be left safely in Sovana during the ride.

GENERAL VISA & 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 UK 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 06/11/2023)

