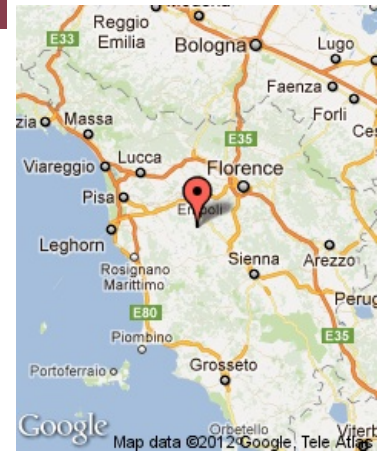


Riding in Chianti Country



Highlights

On this week-long holiday riding in Chianti Country, you'll explore the Tuscan countryside on horseback. You'll discover thermal pools – with natural toning mud included, deserted Medieval hamlets, and convents tucked away in fairytale forests. Well-trained horses, comfy accommodation and all meals included.

Tuscany. It's home to no fewer than six UNESCO protected sites. And with this in mind, it's little wonder so many film directors have set their movies here. Room with a view, Much Ado About Nothing and The English Patient are just a few of the well-known names to have brought the Tuscan countryside to the silver screen. And the area around Montalcino is just as scene stealing. Sun-drenched hills, the nearby Medieval city of San Gimignano and the artists' mecca, Florence, are all within striking distance. Closer to home, you have scenery comprising of gentle rolling hills, vineyards and olive groves.

With four full-days of riding, one half-day, and a free day to explore solo, you'll be spending plenty of quality time outdoors. This tour's really geared around the gorgeous natural thermal pools that are dotted around Tuscany's countryside – the apartments where you'll be staying even have two of their own. Highlights included trekking by horseback to the Bagni di Mommialla sulphur pools, riding through rivers to little Medieval villages and Roman ruins, and exploring the magnificent Tonda and Castalfalfi castles.

Is it for me?

This tour is pretty intensive, so you'll need to be a fairly decent horse rider to be able to come on it – the team that organises it request that you're intermediate and above. It's done in groups of no more than nine, so you should be happy spending time with new people, as you'll be spending the best part of every day for a week together. Lastly, you'll need to be aged 15 or over, and relatively fit and active as most days you'll be riding for five to six hours.

Accommodation

You'll be staying in holiday apartments that have been recently renovated in a traditional Tuscan style, on a farm in the heart of the Tuscan countryside. Outside, there's a swimming pool, a tennis court, and eight mountain bikes for guests to share. Inside, meanwhile, rooms are light and airy, with beamed ceilings, terracotta floor tiles, and rustic-style furniture.

As for food, all meals are included. Lunches consist of delicious food such as fresh Tuscan paninis and picnic fare, while evening meals are taken as a group, at a local restaurant specializing in Tuscan cuisine. And it goes without saying that you will want to be sampling the locally produced wine from the region!

Itinerary

Saturday: Afternoon transfer from Pisa airport 16.30. Aperitif at 19.30 followed by dinner in the village.

Sunday: Villamagna and Volterra Hills. Challenging day-ride through the village of Villamagna stopping off for a fabulous local Tuscan lunch before carrying on through the foothills of poppies and sunflowers surrounding the imposing city of Volterra. You'll also visit the 'Pozzaie' - a sulphurous spring famous from Medieval times.

Prices from

1,123 GBP (7days) per Person

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Monday: Castelfalfi and Tonda Medieval Borgos. Full-day ride north to the ancient castles of Castelfalfi and Tonda. Castelfalfi and its castle were founded in the early 8th century. During the renaissance the Castle of Castelfalfi was transformed from a fortified city into a lavish villa. The hamlet of Tonda and its castle, meanwhile, dates back to 1212. Lunch at Castelfalfi, taking in the stunning panoramic views, before riding home through the rolling fields filled with wildflowers. Dinner in Iano.

Tuesday: Bagnino Ride. Full-day ride along the trail of the sulphuric thermal pools of the region, including those at Bagni di Mommialla. You'll ride past the ancient church of San Ferdiano dating back to the year 1000. The thermal pools of this region have been used for centuries to cure different ailments. In the last century special baths around the source of some of these springs, were used to bath animals with skin problems. The countryside today is diverse, alternating from rolling chalky red hills, to silver-tinged olive groves, and lush green vineyards. Lunch in a picnic spot, while the horses quietly graze nearby. You'll return in time for a hot shower before dinner at the restaurant.

Wednesday: Free day to explore world-famous San Gimignano and its eleven medieval towers. Dinner in Iano.

Thursday: The sanctuary of Pietrina. Half-day ride to the ancient Sanctuary of Pietrina, passing through the farm's soft rolling fields, olive groves, and Tufo rock faces before riding up to the sanctuary of Pietrina. You'll then head on to the ruins of an old watchtower between the two lakes of Montaione before returning for a Tuscan style picnic at the farm's own natural sulphuric pools. Dinner at Iano.

Friday: The Roman Cistern and village of Montaione Trail. River riding, wild forests, Roman ruins and a gorgeous medieval village are all highlights of this full-day ride. Leaving Iano via the 'red springs' you'll ride through both Iano and Marradi, passing the farmhouse 'Orcia' where there's a spectacular panoramic view. Riding on, you'll pass the 'Pozzo Diago' - an ancient stone wall that has now created a ten meter high waterfall. Eventually you'll come to the Roman cistern (2nd century BC) where you'll enjoy a picnic lunch. In the afternoon you'll ride through the river Egola into the national park 'Poggio all' Aglione' before riding to the San Vivaldo convent on your return to Iano.

Saturday: Departure at 10.30am.

Details

Getting there

Pisa is the closest airport – about 40 minutes away by car. The team can organise a transfer for you – for 35 Euros per person if arriving on Saturday at 4.30pm.

Price includes

All Meals, wine with dinner, accommodation in double rooms, riding, horses, tack, experienced guide, luggage transport and excursions described in itinerary.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

Some previous experience is needed