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trail riding worldwide

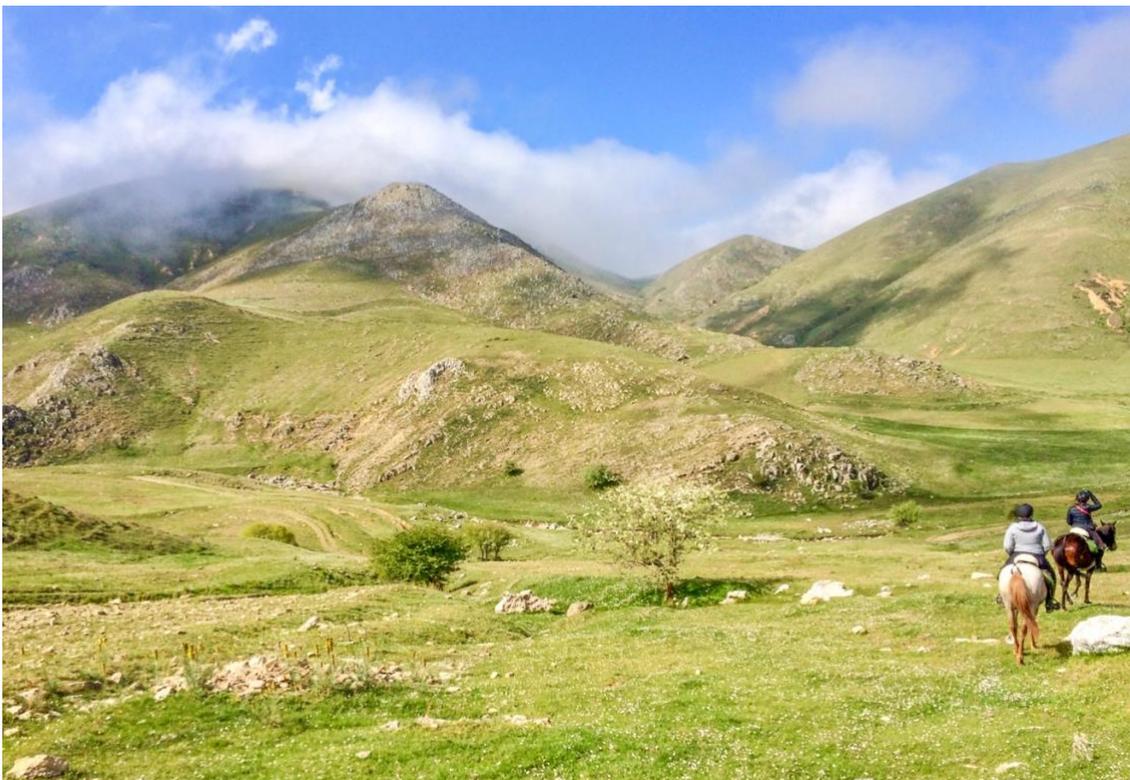
Wild Sicily – Madonie to Etna

Weight limit: 90kg / 14 stone

Nearest airport: Catania

8 days / 7 nights / 6 days riding

Experience this epic trail which crosses the greenest and wildest parts of Sicily, setting off from the eastern Madonie Mountains and crossing the wooded Nebrodi Mountains to arrive at Mount Etna, one of the world's most active volcanoes.



The Riding

This trail is suitable for intermediate and experienced riders. All participants should be confident and comfortable at all three paces riding over varied and rough terrain and they should have experience in hacking out in the open. Good level of fitness is required as there may be long trots and gallops along the way, riding between 6 and 8 hours each day.

Guides & Group sizes

You will be guided by Alex who is a true expert of Sicilian culture, history, biodiversity and natural wonders. He has guided trails through the island for more than ten years and will guide you safely through the most remote parts of Sicily.

Maximum number of riders in a group is 10.



Horses & Tack

The horses are Sicilian native breeds crossed with Arabs. All bred in Sicily. They live out all year round in a herd environment and are hardy and sure footed on the rough terrain. All horses are trained to be obedient, well-behaved, energetic and forward going.

The saddles used are light weight and English style with a sheepskin cover to add some extra comfort. Bridles are special trail riding bridles. Small saddlebags are provided for items such as water bottles, sun cream and extra layers.

Guests are not required to groom and tack up the horses.

Accommodation & Dining

Accommodation during the trail will be in Agriturismo, B&B or good quality hotels. Luggage will be transferred by car between the overnight stops.

Evening meals consist of authentic Sicilian cuisine prepared with local produce. A typical evening meal will include a variety of starters, a pasta course, a meat/main course, dessert, wine, water and a digestif. Picnic lunches are provided by support vehicle and include fresh bread, salads, cheeses, olives, charcuterie, Sicilian specialities, wine or other drinks on request, coffee or tea. Special diets and allergies can be catered for with advance notice.



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

Arrive at Palermo airport and get transferred to *Casalvecchio Geraci*, an old farmstead dating from the 1800s, which has been restored and transformed into an agriturismo, immersed in deep Sicily, on the border between the *Madonie Park* and the island's agricultural hinterland. You will enjoy a dinner prepared with local produce and spend the night here.

Day 2: Casalvecchio – San Mauro Castelverde (hours of riding: 7; km: 30)

After breakfast you will set off at around 8.30 in the morning and begin the trail by riding along the valley of the *River Pollina*, along ancient paths used to transport livestock dating from the Bourbon era, surrounded by fields of grain and hay. Enjoy a picnic lunch before climbing towards the village of *San Mauro Castelverde*, a medieval town perched at the top of a mountain at about 1100 meters above sea level. Dinner and the night is spend in an old Franciscan convent, which has been transformed into a hotel.

Day 3: San Mauro Castelverde – Monte Soprano (hours of riding: 6; km: 32)

Setting off along old paths with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, passing the border between the provinces of *Palermo*, *Enna* and *Messina*, reaching an altitude of approximately 1200 metres. Ride directly beneath the great windmills of a wind farm, before descending into the forests of the *Sambughetti-Campanito reserve*, where you will stop for a picnic lunch. Continue on to the territory of *Nicosia*, followed by *Cerami*, before arriving at the agriturismo *Monte Soprano*, a beautiful farmhouse with a swimming pool set on the slopes of the *Nebrodi Mountains*. Dinner and spend the night.

Day 4: Monte Soprano – Villa Miraglia (hours of riding: 7; km: 38)

Ride through the heart of the *Nebrodi Natural Park*, along the famous "*Dorsale*" (the *Nebrodi Ridge*), passing through forests and high mountain pastures. Enjoy extraordinary views over the *Tyrrhenian Sea* and the *Aeolian Islands* to the north, and the island's hinterland to the south – *Enna*, *Caltanissetta*, *Agrigento*, *Siracusa*, *Catania*, and *Etna* towering above everything else. Enter the *Nebrodi Natural Park* through beech woods in the territory of *San Fratello*, famous for its *sanfratellani* horses, a native breed which you may catch a glimpse of grazing in the wild. Stop for a picnic lunch in a shaded spot beneath centuries-old trees. In the afternoon, you will arrive at the *Relais Villa Miraglia*, where a delicious dinner made with local *Nebrodi* products awaits.

Day 5: Villa Miraglia – Monte Colla (hours of riding: 8; km:42)

This is probably the most beautiful day of the trail, riding for more than 40 kilometres along the "*Dorsale*" through mountains, woods and lakes, in the midst of a strikingly beautiful landscape. Come to the *Maulazzo Lake*, dominated by *Monte Soro*, the highest peak in the *Nebrodi mountain range* (at 1847 metres) and covered in magnificent beech woods. Reach the famous lake *Biviere di Cesarò*, which is a resting place for migrating birds. Continue along the "*Dorsale*", with lush forests giving way to clearings with panoramic views over the *Aeolian Islands* and the majestic peak of *Mount Etna*. Arrive tired but satisfied at *Monte Colla*, the most isolated hotel on the island, housed in an eighteenth-century aristocratic home at around 1400 metres above sea level. Enjoy a delicious dinner prepared with local produce and spend the night.

Day 6: Monte Colla – Etna North (hours of riding: 7; km: 36)

Set off in the direction of the source of the *Alcantara River*, and continue on towards *Randazzo*, a typical Sicilian village between the *Nebrodi* and *Etna Parks*. Pass through *Randazzo* before ascending *Etna's* northern slopes, reaching *Mount Spagnolo*, and follow the *Altomontana piste* to the accommodation, the *Chalet Clan dei Ragazzi*, immersed in an enchanting pine forest. Dinner and spend the night.

Day 7: Etna North - Castiglione di Sicilia (hours of riding: 7, km: 35)

Set off at around 9.00 in the morning. Crossing lava flows from various older and more recent eruptions. Climb up through forests of pine, oak and chestnut and past volcanic caves, enjoying breathtaking views of the mountains of Sicily and Calabria. Reach the *Rifugio di Timpa Rossa* at an altitude of 1844 metres and stop for a picnic lunch. Depending on the season and the conditions, you may climb up to the craters from the last major eruption of 2002. After lunch, continue along small country lanes bordered by stone walls made from lava rock and paths crossing back and forth across the river before arriving at the *Gorges of*

Castiglione and the *Cuba Bizantina*, a place of worship built in an unusual quadrangular shape, dating from around the seventh or eighth century AD. Arrive at *Castiglione di Sicilia*, where you will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 8: Departure

After breakfast you will be transferred to Catania airport.



The price includes

- 6 full days of riding
- Shared accommodation
- Breakfasts
- Picnic lunches provided by the support vehicle
- Evening meals
- Drinks during meals
- Airport transfers to/from the nearest airport
- All arrangements for duration of holiday
- Services of guide

Not Included

- Flights
- Tips

Flights & Airport transfers

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

Please plan your flights to/from Catania as follows:

Arrival on Day 1 between 12pm (midday) and 5pm.

Departure on Day 8 between 11am and 4pm.

Airport transfers to/from Catania airport are included in the holiday. Pick-up time from Catania on first day of your holiday will be confirmed after the booking has been confirmed.

What to bring

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

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

- Your own well-fitted hard hat of the current standard
- Comfortable riding trousers – jeans are not recommended
- Riding or hiking boots with a definite heel and good grip. Ensure that your shoes are comfortable and safe for walking on difficult terrain. Waterproof footwear is recommended.
- Chaps
- Riding gloves
- Bumbag
- Long sleeved T-shirts – to protect you from the sun
- Warm jumper / fleece – essential for riding at altitude and on colder days. It can be surprisingly cold at higher altitude so we recommend bringing several warm items which can be stored in your saddlebags.
- Waterproofs – in the mountains the weather can be unpredictable. Bring a good waterproof coat and lightweight waterproof trousers.
- Buff / bandana
- Comfortable clothing for evenings
- Light weight shoes to wear after riding
- Sun cream & lip balm
- Sunglasses – to protect your eyes against the sun and dust
- Swimming costume & light weight towel
- Reusable water bottle
- Plug adapter
- Insect repellent & bite cream
- Personal medication

Climate

Sicily has a mixture of Mediterranean climate close to the coast and more continental climate in the inland areas. Summers are generally very warm with temperatures between 25-30°C during the day, and precipitation is quite low. Spring and autumn are fairly warm with daytime temperatures at low 20s and slightly higher chance of rain.

During the trail you will be riding over higher altitudes and mountain ranges where the weather can be surprisingly cold and unpredictable all year round. Rain can occur at any time of the year. Please be prepared for any type of weather during your holiday.



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 Sicily 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.

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

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Holidays are confirmed with 20% non-refundable deposit.

The full balance is due 56 days before 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 booking process.



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