



SADDLETRAVEL.COM

Coast to Coast

Weight limit: 90kg / 14 stone
Nearest airport: Palermo / Catania
8 days / 7 nights / 6 days riding



A fantastic adventure which allows you to cross Sicily on horseback, from the north to the south coast. This trail offers unparalleled immersion in Sicily's complex history and agricultural heritage, its magic and its legends.

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 the 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

You will arrive at Casa "Il Bosco", a charming restored nineteenth century country house, immersed in the wild countryside of the Madonie Park, with breathtaking views of the

island's north coast and the Aeolian Islands. You will enjoy a dinner prepared with local produce and spend the night here.



Day 2: Casa "Il Bosco" - Piano Battaglia (hours of riding: 7)

After breakfast you will be assigned your horse for the trail and we will set off from Casa "Il Bosco" at about 8.30 in the morning. The day will begin with a beautiful climb up through wild Mediterranean vegetation and woods, with fantastic views of the Tyrrhenian Sea. We will pass the famous Sanctuary of Gibilmanna and continue through woods of holm oak, cork and downy oak to the territory of Isnello. After a picnic lunch, we will begin our ascent on the northern slopes of Pizzo Carbonara, Sicily's second highest mountain at 1979 metres, riding through lush forests of oak, holm oak and beech trees to reach Piano Battaglia, a mountain station located at the heart of the Madonie Park, where you will enjoy a dinner prepared using typical local produce and spend the night at Rifugio Marini.

Day 3: Piano Battaglia - Feudo San Giorgio (hours of riding: 7)

After breakfast we will set off at about 8.30 in the morning. We will follow a route through the mountains in the heart of the Madonie Park and reach high altitudes from where you will begin to see Sicily's interior. We will pass the Sanctuary of Madonna dell'Alto, at 1819 metres, the highest sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the world, before beginning our descent from the high Madonie mountains. We will stop for a picnic lunch near Nociuzzi, in the area of Castellana Sicula. In the afternoon, we will continue along ancient paths through agricultural land to reach Feudo San Giorgio, an old 19th century farmstead which has been renovated and is equipped with a swimming pool. You will enjoy a dinner made with local produce and spend the night here.

Day 4: Feudo San Giorgio - Mappa (hours of riding: 7/8)

We will have breakfast and set off from the farm at about 8.30 in the morning. We will descend towards the southern part of the Imera River, the western boundary of the Madonie

area, which we will cross, before climbing up the other side of the valley. The trail will now take us into the heart of Sicily's interior, its "breadbasket" since time immemorial, which is criss-crossed by "trazzere", ancient royal pathways, established by the Bourbons in the 18th and 19th centuries to ensure free movement of livestock and people across the island. We will pass the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Bilici, at the geographical centre of the island, before riding on past the train station of Marianopoli and through endless fields of wheat and hay, to reach Mappa, the former residence of the Princes of Spadafora, equipped with a swimming pool. You will enjoy a delicious dinner and spend the night here.

Day 5: Mappa - Aragona (hours of riding: 7/8)

After breakfast we will leave Mappa at around 8.00 in the morning. We will ride through fields to the territory of the picturesque, ancient village of Sutera, which is considered one of the oldest settlements in human history and retains many traces of its prehistoric origins. We will continue on through the beautiful Monte Conca nature reserve to reach the valley of the River Platani, one of western Sicily's main waterways. We will stop for a picnic lunch and continue our ride along the valley to reach our next stop, the farm of Principe di Aragona, another restored old farmstead, equipped with a swimming pool, where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 6: Aragona - Agrigento (hours of riding: 4/5)

After breakfast we will set off at about 8.30 in the morning in the direction of Agrigento, the site of the ancient Greek city of Akragas, founded in 580 BC by the Rhodians and Cretans. After riding through an agricultural area near Aragona, we will arrive at the Macalube di Aragona, where we will witness the strange phenomenon of small mud volcanoes formed by methane rising up through the earth and creating craters as it emerges. We will ride on towards Passo dei Briganti, in the territory of Agrigento, where we will have lunch and have time to relax during the afternoon, before enjoying a guided tour in the late afternoon of Valley of the Temples (the Temples of Hera, Concordia, Hercules, Zeus and Castor & Pollux), a world heritage site that contains some of the best preserved Greek temples in the world. Back at Passo dei Briganti you will enjoy a dinner prepared with local produce and spend the night.

Day 7: Agrigento - Torre Salsa (hours of riding: 7)

We will have breakfast and set off at around 8.30 in the morning, following a very beautiful route through the countryside of Agrigento, predominantly cultivated with olive and almond groves, with wonderful views of the Mediterranean coast. We will continue to the coastal reserve of Torre Salsa, one of Sicily's most beautiful and best preserved coastlines, before concluding the trail on the reserve's beautiful beaches. Dinner and overnight at Luna Minoica, a high quality hotel.

Day 8: Departure

Breakfast and transfer to the airport.



Flights & Airport transfers

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

Airport transfers to/from Palermo and Catania airports are included in the holiday. Pick-up times on the first day of your holiday will be confirmed after the booking has been made.

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 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%

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 the booking process.



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