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Residential Week, Sicily

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



This residential week offers guests the opportunity to discover one of the most beautiful and unspoilt parts of Sicily from the comfort of your host's country house on the north coast, within the Madonie Natural Park. Guests will enjoy beautiful and varied riding, including visits to a local vineyard, nearby villages, the breathtaking north coast, and a taste of the high Madonie Mountains, not to mention delicious meals prepared using local produce and a true insight into Sicilian rural life.

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 5 and 6 hours a day.

Guides & Group sizes

You will be hosted by Alex and his family. A true expert of Sicilian culture, history, biodiversity and natural wonders. Alex has guided trails through the island for more than

ten years and will guide you safely through this remote part 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 is 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.

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 could 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. You will enjoy a dinner prepared with local produce before settling in for the night.



Day 2: Sanctuary of Gibilmanna and Pizzo Sant'Angelo (hours of riding: 5)

An enchanting introduction to the local area and the territory of Cefalù. After breakfast, we will set off and begin the day by riding around and then to the summit of the highest mountain in the territory of Cefalù, Pizzo Sant'Angelo (1081 metres). When the weather is good, from here you can admire spectacular views of the high Madonie Mountains, the Tyrrhenian Coast from Palermo to Capo D'Orlando, the Aeolian Islands, and much more. We will have a picnic lunch and visit the famous Sanctuary of Gibilmanna, before riding back to our base to enjoy a rich dinner prepared using local produce.

Day 3: Wine tasting (hours of riding: 5)

After breakfast we will begin the day's ride following an ancient trazzera (old paths used for transporting animals which date from the Bourbon era) in the direction of Castelbuono, one of the most famous villages of the Madonie area, with beautiful views towards the high Madonie Mountains. Before lunch, we will reach the renowned vineyard of the Abbazia Santa Anastasia, a restored abbey, where we will enjoy a guided tour of the cellars, a tasting and a light lunch, before riding back to Casa "Il Bosco" in the afternoon.

Day 4: Rural life and Cefalù (hours of riding: 5)

In the morning we will ride to a local farm and get a real taste for Sicilian rural life, learning about how ricotta and local cheeses are made. We will then return to our base via one of the

most panoramic spots in the territory of Cefalù, with fantastic views towards Palermo on one side and the Nebrodi Mountains on the other. In the late afternoon we will go down to the charming seaside town of Cefalù, where you will enjoy a guided tour of the beautiful historic centre and a delicious seafood dinner on the water's edge.

Day 5: Madonie Mountains (hours of riding: 6)

After breakfast we will set off on a two-day trail into the high Madonie Mountains. The day will begin with a beautiful climb up through wild Mediterranean vegetation and woods, with fantastic views of the Tyrrhenian Sea. 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 6: Madonie Mountains (hours of riding: 6)

Before leaving the heart of the Madonie Mountains we will visit the Battaglietta, a depression in the landscape where all of the meltwater gathers and then travels along underground tunnels to Cefalù. We will descend from the high mountains, riding through beautiful woodland to reach the territory of the characteristic village of Isnello. We will stop for a picnic lunch, before returning in the afternoon to our base through wild and unspoilt vegetation, with beautiful views of the north coast.

Day 7: Sant'Ambrogio beach (hours of riding: 5)

On the last day of your stay, we will ride through dense Mediterranean vegetation and small country lanes to the small, picturesque seaside village of Sant'Ambrogio, where we will visit a local oil press and enjoy an olive oil tasting. Depending on the weather and the time of year, we will take the horses down to the beach and enjoy a beach picnic, before riding back to our base in the afternoon, to enjoy a delicious final dinner.

Day 8

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 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.

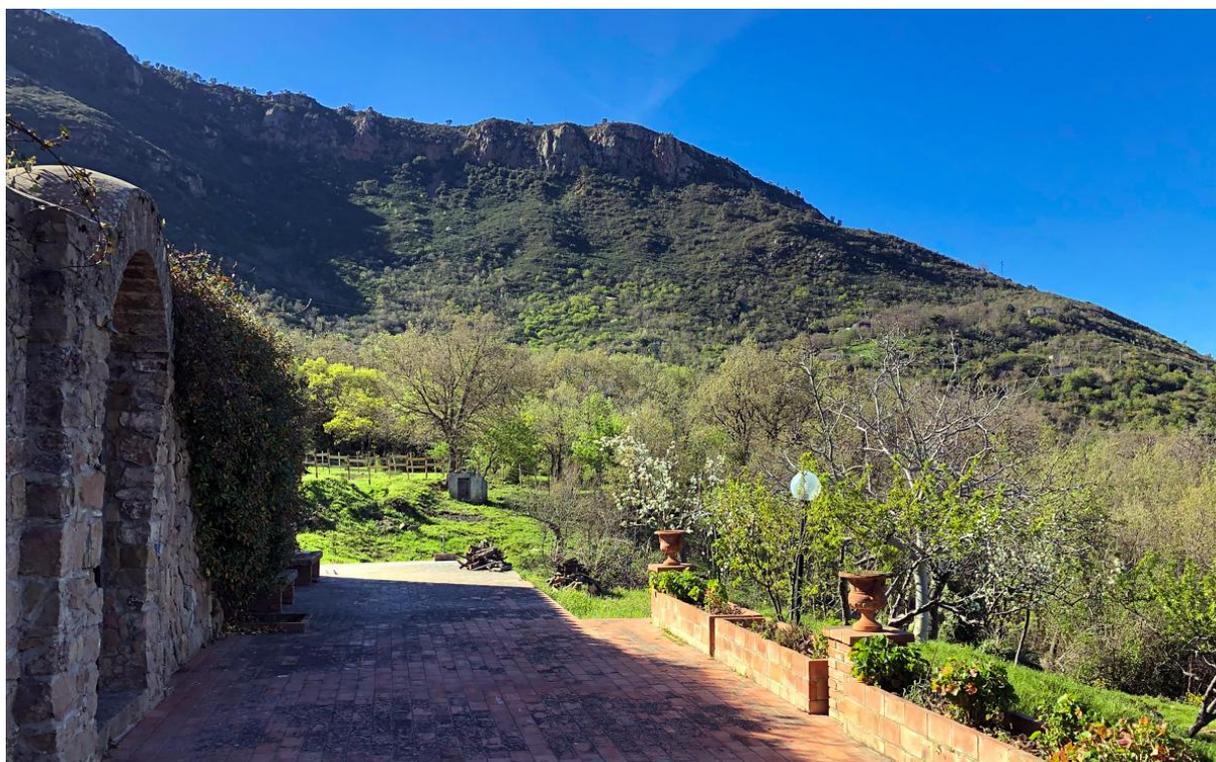
Currency & tipping

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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