



RIDE WORLD WIDE

ITALY

SANTA CRISTINA 2025

RIDE INFORMATION

The Santa Cristina estate is in Italy's Lazio province, in the little known 'Alta Tuscia' region that forms a corridor between Tuscany and Umbria. It is about ½ hour's drive north-west of Lake Bolsena, in an unspoilt part of rural Italy that is the heart of Etruria, once one of the main centres for the Etruscan population and still famed for its wine production. Once a favourite summer retreat of the young Pope Pius XII, the estate is a peaceful, rural hideaway, easily accessible from Rome, well placed for sightseeing and within easy reach of water sports at Lake Bolsena and the Italian coast. It's a super place for a relaxed holiday that includes opportunities to ride, try a number of other activities, sightsee or simply take 'time out', whilst enjoying good food and wine. At the centre of the estate is a small castle, built in the 18th Century and the property of the Caterini family for generations. It has been lovingly restored as a private home by Antonio Caterini and his wife Cristina over the last 20 years and the cottages and farmhouse once used by farm workers, have been converted to comfortable guest accommodation. The aim is for a mixed holiday with some informal rides out, with time to yourself, to explore locally, relax by the pool, play tennis, golf, walk or go for a bicycle ride - something for everyone.



DATES

Stays at Santa Cristina can be arranged on request between late March and November, with 7 and 4 night breaks most usual, starting Saturday or Wednesday respectively. During **August** there is a **minimum stay of 7 nights**. Please contact us at Ride World Wide to discuss and check availability for the dates you have in mind.

HORSES

There are about 20 horses at Santa Cristina, a mixture of Thoroughbred, warmblood and Italian crosses, Anglo-Arabs as well as a couple of children's ponies. They are looked after with great care by the resident horse manager. The horses are well-schooled, sensible to handle, responsive and enjoyable to ride. Several are schooled to show jump and riding and jumping lessons in one of the two sand schools can be requested (these are not always possible).

TACK

Tack is English style, good quality general purpose saddles and leather bridles. The horses are mainly ridden in snaffle bits.

RIDING

Riding programmes usually include morning or afternoon rides of about 2 hours, and sometimes a longer day of riding with lunch out (picnic or at a local restaurant). Short rides out explore the estate and immediately surrounding area whilst day rides head further afield, perhaps to Lake Mezzano, Lake Bolsena or the nearby towns of Onano, Proceno and Sorano. A standard full week stay is aimed at intermediate riders and includes riding on 5 days - 4 days with a 2 hour ride out in the morning or afternoon and 1 day with about 4 to 5 hours riding, either broken into separate morning and afternoon rides or (weather and logistics permitting), a day ride with lunch. A short 4 night stay includes riding on 3 days with a morning or afternoon ride on 2 days and one day with about 4 or 5 hours riding (sometimes a long ride with lunch, sometimes split into 2 shorter rides - always weather dependent). **Please note** that during July & August there will be **no full day** rides due to the heat (a 7 night program will include 6 half day hacks). Rides are lead by the main horse manager or an assistant guide (and occasionally by your host Antonio), and groups are usually restricted to a maximum of 9 or 10 riders. As well as riding out, there are two manèges for schooling and lessons, one dedicated to jumping and one to flat work - please note that instructors are not always available for jumping / school work. You will be asked to wear a hard hat when you ride. Horses are generally prepared and tacked up / un-tacked for you by your guide - although you are welcome to lend a hand if you wish.



WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is about 90 kgs / 14st 4lbs but this does depend on riding experience and fitness - if you are 85 kg or more please contact us to check that suitable horses are available.

PACE

The riding pace is tailored (as far as possible) to suit, with rides split (as far as possible), according to guests' ability and preferences. The estate is a mixture of agricultural land, oak and chestnut woods - most of the riding is on dirt tracks and there are plenty of these around fields and through woods that are ideal for trots and canters. As you ride further afield, there is some roadwork, but often good opportunities to trot and canter on tracks around fields & vineyards and through forests. Rides are at a moderate, well varied pace overall but if you wish you can just hack out at a gentle pace, enjoying the tranquillity of the Italian countryside.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

To ride at Santa Cristina you are expected to have some previous experience and you will be asked to complete a questionnaire before you book to confirm your ability level. Full day rides are aimed at riders of at least an intermediate standard who are well balanced, secure and in control at a walk, trot and fast canter and are used to riding out with a group of horses, but those with less experience are also welcome with riding hours tailored (as far as possible) to suit. Novice riders can be catered for on request, but we would always encourage you to master the basics and make sure you are relaxed and comfortable on a horse before you go. Family holidays are possible, where children can have riding lessons in an enclosed arena, hack out safely on the private estate on or off leading rein and when not riding, be free and well occupied with other activities. Generally the minimum age for riding is 7yrs and children need to be **14yrs or over** and strong, confident riders to join longer day rides off the estate - if you are planning a trip with children please call us at Ride World Wide to discuss.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Santa Cristina makes a wonderful base for a group holiday, as well as for singles, couples and families with children. Mixed itineraries can be organised. If you do not wish to ride, cycling is an excellent alternative, with mountain bikes to hire and Antonio a qualified guide (extra charge); you can explore on foot, or if you wish to go further afield, can organise some wonderful walking with a licensed professional guide (extra charge) - a lovely way to learn about the natural and human history of the area and see some of the pre-Etruscan ruins and Roman remains that are part of the fabric of the surrounding countryside. Other options include wine tastings, visits to the local wine co-operatives and cooking lessons - Cristina is an excellent cook and gives lessons in different aspects of Italian cookery (book in advance to ensure availability). You can organise a massage and there is also a large (unheated) swimming pool (usually open 1st June to 30th September), a hard tennis court, a mini-football pitch for children and plenty of open, undeveloped space in which children can run around freely. This part of Italy is known for its thermal pools and there is a big thermal spa with 'wellness centre' at Sorana, 18 kms and about 20 minutes drive from the castle or Lake Bolsena, about ½ hour's drive away, is a great day trip. 60 kms in perimeter, up to 170 metres deep with two small islands, Bisentia and Martana, and long dark sand beaches, the lake is a super place for water sports. Sailing, wind surfing, water skiing, fishing and snorkelling can all be organised, there are boats to hire at the beach close to the village of Capodimonte and snorkelling to see the Etruscan ruins that lie beneath the water is also possible. For golfers, the Par 3, 9 hole golf course, Golf Club Acquapendente, is about 10kms from the castle and mixed golfing and riding programs can be arranged on request. The fortress towns of Pitigliano, Sorano and Sovano are close by and well worth a visit, looking particularly atmospheric when lit up at night. Orvieto with its marvellous Italian gothic church, cobbled streets and shops is within 40 mins drive and a 'must' is a visit to the famous town of Civita di Bagnoregio (the 'Dying Town') - also within ¾ hour's drive.



TERRAIN

The estate is a mixture of woodland and fields. Around it is open agricultural land (fields of wheat and rough grassland for sheep), gentle undulating hills that provide good views across the valleys, oak and chestnut woods. As you head away from the estate, dirt tracks take you through forests, around fields, across grass-covered hills and up and down steeper hills. Some of the riding is on old Etruscan roads, a network of chalky 'white' tracks that used to link the old settlements and are now used by occasional farm vehicles. These can be quite hard and stony but the horses are used to the going. There is some road work, crossing tarmac roads and riding through local villages and you will be asked to get off from time to time to lead your horse over rough, slippery or stony ground.

ACCOMMODATION

Guest accommodation at Santa Cristina is in the large ivy-clad 18th Century farmhouse ('fattoria') in the grounds of the castle and in separate small guest cottages close by - one split into 2 apartments and a newly built family cottage. The fattoria has been restored for guests and contains 8 apartments, each with its own entrance, as well as 14 individual double or twin bedrooms. The apartments are all different, of varying sizes, sleeping 4 to 8 people in two or three bedrooms, with small kitchen, sitting room, one or two bathrooms (with loo and shower) and laundry facilities. They are ideal for families or groups of friends. The individual bedrooms are good-sized doubles or twins, each with small en-suite bathroom (with loo and shower). A few hundred yards past the fattoria, is a separate guest cottage that is divided into two separate units (interlinked by a lockable door) each with two bedrooms (one twin and one double) with en-suite bathrooms (loo and shower), a separate small kitchen and living area. French windows from each half of the cottage open onto a small terrace, set with table and chairs, overlooking an area of lawn. One side has a small private plunge pool (shared by both halves) making the cottage a lovely option for one or two families. A new family cottage was added in 2018, built in the woods a few hundred yards above the tennis court. It has 2 double bedrooms (one can be made into a triple), 3 bathrooms, a living room and kitchen, as well as private hot tub outside. Accommodation overall is 'homely', rather than luxurious, in the traditional style of rural Italy with wrought iron or wooden beds, dark wood furniture that includes some antiques and terracotta tiled floors, but there are some charming touches, you will be reasonably comfortable and above all, can relax! The ground floor of the fattoria houses a large "taverna" with brick vaulted ceiling and double French doors opening onto a gravelled terrace. Part of the taverna is for dining - lunches and dinners are served here or beneath gazebos on the terrace just outside - and part is a spacious sitting area with adjacent room with billiard and table tennis table.



MEALS

Food at Santa Cristina, as in most of rural Italy, is very important and you will be well fed during your stay. Breakfast is buffet style, served in the dining room on the ground floor of the main castle with a choice of bread, butter and jam, cereal, home baked sweet croissants, brioche or cake, with tea, coffee and fruit juice. For most programs lunch & dinner most days are **NOT included** automatically although you can pre-book full or half board at a supplement or can book meal(s) a few days in advance / up until the day before to be paid in Italy - so you can decide when you are there whether to eat at Santa Cristina, or try a local restaurant. Lunch & dinner are normally served in the taverna. On full day rides lunch (pre-booked but paid locally) might be at a local bar or restaurant. Menus are fixed and typically lunches are 3 courses and dinners 4 courses, starting with something like mushroom, tomato or olive crostini or perhaps a plate of antipasta - locally produced salamis and hams; then a home made pasta or perhaps a typical pasta and bean soup and after this, a main meat dish (perhaps wild boar, guinea fowl or other game) followed by fresh fruit or a traditional cake for pudding. Authentic home-made pizzas cooked in a large wood oven in the gardens by the taverna are another delicious treat.

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MEALS cont.

Mineral water and tea or coffee are included with lunch and dinner, wine or beer is available at an extra charge. There are a number of separate tables in the dining area of the taverna although meals are usually eaten as a group - the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed and if you are travelling alone your hosts will make every effort to ensure you are not left to eat alone (unless you prefer to of course!)

WEATHER

The climate in the area is generally mild although early spring, January to March, can 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 wild flowers, poppies and sunflowers at their best in June. July and August can 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. In late autumn and winter temperatures drop again, similar to early spring but November days can still be warm enough to eat outside. It can rain at anytime - more likely in spring and autumn, but even then rarely persistent.

ITINERARIES

7 night stays are generally Saturday to Saturday and 4 night breaks, Wednesday to Sunday - although there is flexibility for some programs. The itineraries below are examples of standard 7 and 4 night riding programmes. **Please note** they are just examples and routes and daily arrangements may be varied in your guide's discretion if weather, local conditions or circumstances require. Daily timetables can vary a little with seasons - in summer there may be an earlier start and a longer rest in the middle of the day. Full day rides are not usually possible if it is very hot / in peak summer months.

Example Itinerary - Full Week (1 full day riding and 4 morning / afternoons)

Day 1 (Saturday) - Arrive Santa Cristina in the afternoon (check in after 14.00). Shown to your room to settle in. Depending on arrival time, there may be time to meet the horses. Then perhaps join your hosts for a welcome drink and tour of the restored castle, climbing the tower for a wonderful bird's eye view of the surrounding country if you wish. A briefing on the riding planned for the next few days and time to ask any questions, before dinner in the 'taverna' (we would usually book dinner on the first night for you automatically unless you request otherwise - you will be billed for this locally). Night at Santa Cristina.



Day 2 (Sunday) - Wander up to the dining room at the back of the castle for breakfast at about 9 am, then down to the sand school to meet the horses and for your first morning ride. Time to try your horse in the arena and once everyone is settled, set off riding into the hills on the west of the plateau on which the castle is situated. Follow a private road from the castle then onto a ridge with fields and woods on either side. There is some good going on the dirt track here and you will be able to try your horse at a trot and canter if you wish before reaching a viewing point, from which, on a clear day you can see the enormous sparkling crater of Lake Bolsena to one side and the hills surrounding smaller Lake Mezzano to the other. Sometimes you can even see the sea, some 25 miles away, glinting in the distance like a mirror. The route continues on winding tracks, through wooded hills to reach Selva di Onano (forest), before returning to Santa Cristina. The afternoon free to swim, explore on foot or perhaps for a game of tennis. You can book lunch & dinner ahead (paid locally) if you wish. Night Santa Cristina. (B)

Day 3 (Monday) - Breakfast and perhaps a day's riding to Lake Mezzano. The lake, once a volcanic crater is the site of human settlements that date back to the pre-Etruscan era (approx 2700 years ago), now submerged under the water due to earthquakes. From Santa Cristina follow a route through farmland and hills thick with chestnut woods, then down towards the open plain where the lake lies. There are good chances to canter (for those who wish) along tracks that cross the fields and vineyards bordering the 'Selva del Lamone' Naturale Reserve. **cont.**

ITINERARIES cont.

Day 3 cont. Lunch (pre-booked for you but charged locally) at a magical spot, a small rural restaurant, Fra Viaco, in a wonderful position overlooking the Lake - tie up the horses, relax at tables set up in the shade and enjoy the view! Weather permitting there might be time to swim in the lake before riding back through woods to Santa Cristina (approx 30kms riding). Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Night Santa Cristina. (B)

NOTE - full day rides are not offered during July or August - the program would include 6 hacks of 2 hours each.

Day 4 (Tuesday) - A rest day, free to make your own plans and perhaps visit some local sites. There are several fortified villages close to Santa Cristina - Pitigliano, Sorano and Sovano - are all set in commanding positions and well worth a visit. Orvieto, with its wonderful Italian gothic cathedral, cobbled streets and interesting shops is a little further afield as is Civita di Bagnoregio, known as the 'Dying Town', birthplace of Saint Buenventure and strikingly placed overlooking the Tiber River. You might also take time to visit the thermal spa, Terme de Sorano, about 18 kms from the castle or head to Lake Bolsena for a boat trip or to try some watersports. Own arrangements for / to book lunch and dinner. Night at Santa Cristina. (B)



Day 5 (Wednesday) - Another morning ride, perhaps towards Lake Bolsena, the biggest volcanic lake in Europe. There are wonderful glimpses and views of the lake as you ride and you will also see scattered archaeological sites, including the ruins of many Etruscan tombs, some now used by local farmers as wine cellars but still reminders of the incredible history of the area, along the way. The return route to Santa Cristina might take you through the village of Gradoli, with its magnificent Farnese renaissance palace, a wedding gift from Pope Paulus III Farnese to his nephew in the 16th C. Once at the top of the crater, follow an old track through woods back to Santa Cristina. Afternoon at leisure. Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Night Santa Cristina (B)

Day 6 (Thursday) - Breakfast and set off again maybe following the Brigands Trail, first crossing a provincial road and then heading north. The route takes you through rural country, wooded hills, small fields and along a forest track that winds around the hills to bring you out below the fortified town of Onano, with a medieval castle at its centre. Centuries ago this town was the stronghold of the Monaldeschi family who ruled the area in the middle ages. Continue riding, sometimes through woods and sometimes in open fields with lovely views, to the little medieval church of Madonna delle Grazie and along a winding country track back to Santa Cristina. The afternoon at leisure. Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Night Santa Cristina. (B)

Day 7 (Friday) - Breakfast and your last morning ride, following an old Etruscan trail through thick woods to the top of the crater surrounding lake Bolsena. The remarkable scenery includes vineyards, Etruscan tombs, the prominent volcanic lake and a panorama dominated by the famous Farnese palace in Gradoli; a gift made by the Pope in 1500 for his nephew for his wedding - what a present! Return to the castle riding through the vineyards and woods with an enchanting canter along a tunnel made by oak trees. Afternoon at leisure, to explore or just relax by the pool. Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Final night Santa Cristina. (B)

Day 8 (Saturday) - Breakfast and own arrangements for onward travel. Checkout is usually 10am -12 noon. (B)



4 night break (1 full day riding and 2 morning / afternoons).

Day 1 (Wednesday) - Arrive Santa Cristina in the afternoon (check in after 14.00). Shown to your room to settle in. Depending on arrival time, there may be time to meet the horses. Then perhaps join your hosts for a welcome drink and tour of the restored castle, climbing the tower for a wonderful bird's eye view of the surrounding country if you wish. A briefing on the riding planned for the next few days and time to ask any questions, before returning to the 'taverna' for dinner (we would usually book dinner on the first night for you automatically unless you request otherwise - you will be billed for this as an extra charge locally). Night at Santa Cristina.

Days 2 to 4 (Thursday to Saturday) - Three days to ride out, explore the area and enjoy the activities on offer. Your stay includes 2 morning or afternoon rides of 2 hours and also a longer ride, which may be a full day ride, perhaps to Lake Mezzano, with lunch included (weather and conditions allowing) or split into a morning and afternoon ride. Timetables are organized as far as possible to suit, taking into account weather, riding ability and guest numbers and you may be able to swap a ride out for a lesson or try some of the small cross country jumps on the estate if you wish. When not riding, time is your own to relax by the pool, perhaps make use of the tennis court or enjoy exploring on foot. You can also arrange a cooking lesson, hire bicycles or head off sightseeing locally, perhaps visiting the lakes, Orvieto or the 'Dying Town', Civita di Bagnoregio. Your hosts will do what they can to advise and help arrange activities, whilst also leaving you the chance to simply relax and enjoy the peaceful surroundings and pool. Own arrangements for lunch and dinner. Nights Santa Cristina. (B).

Day 5 (Sunday) - Breakfast and own arrangements for onward travel. Checkout is usually 10am -12 noon. (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.

High season - 16th June to 15th September

Low season - 1st April to 15th June & 16th September to 1st November

Riding programmes:

Full Week (7 nights)

Dates: Saturday to Saturday, on request from 1st April to 1st November

Rates: Low season 1385 Euros per person sharing; High season 1525 Euros per person sharing.

Single supplement (double bedroom, single use) - Low season 465 Euros; High season 515 Euros

Rate INCLUDES: 7 nights twin / double B&B accommodation, riding (either 4 morning or afternoon rides (2 hours) and one day ride (either as a day ride of about 4-5 hours stopping for lunch (extra charge) out riding, or morning and afternoon rides returning to base for lunch (extra charge)), guiding and equipment.

NB during July and August the program is 6 half day hacks (full day rides are not possible due to high temperatures).

Full and half board meal supplements - 280 Euros per person half board; 460 Euros per person full board.

These can be booked ahead but payment will be made locally.

Short Breaks (4 nights)

Dates: Wednesday to Sunday, on request from 1st April to 1st November (excepting August)

Rates: Low season 860 Euros per person sharing double room;

High season 940 Euros per person sharing double room;

Single supplement (double bedroom, single use) - Low season 265 Euros; High season 290 Euros

Rate INCLUDES: 4 nights twin / double B&B accommodation, riding (2 morning or afternoon rides (2 hours each) and one day ride (either as a long ride of about 4-5 hours stopping for lunch (extra charge) out riding, or morning and afternoon rides returning to base for lunch (extra charge)), guiding and equipment.

NB during July the program is 4 half day hacks.

Full and half board meal supplements - 160 Euros per person half board; 250 Euros per person full board.

These can be booked ahead but payment will be made locally.

ALL Rates EXCLUDE: Flights / travel to Italy and taxes, transfers between your arrival / departing airport and Santa Cristina, meals other than breakfast, personal medical / travel insurance (compulsory), your bar bill, non-included activities (extra riding, guided walks, wine tasting etc), any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave.

Single supplements - Please note that if you are travelling alone, you will normally need to pay a supplement for use of a double room as single but if you are prepared to share a twin room with another rider, we will refund the supplement if there is a sharer.

Cycling - Non riding partners can join to bicycle instead of ride. Please enquire for prices & program.

Cottages and apartments are also available for private 7 night bookings on self-catering basis, with activities extra - rates on request



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flights and Travel - The closest international airport is Rome Fiumicino, with Rome Ciampino also an easy drive. There are several daily flights between London and Rome - British Airways and Al Italia fly to the main Fiumicino airport; Easy Jet and Ryan Air fly from London and regional UK airports to the smaller Rome Ciampino airport. British Airways also fly daily to Pisa and Easy Jet and Ryan Air have flights to Pisa from several regional airports.



Getting from Rome to Santa Cristina - In most cases we suggest hiring a car to drive yourself to Santa Cristina as you will then have flexibility for sightseeing and exploring locally during your stay. We will supply directions, which are quite straightforward from Rome. If you prefer not to drive, we can arrange taxi transfers from Rome to Santa Cristina (extra charge - except in the case of the Medieval Castle Tour) or you can take a train from Rome (or Pisa via Florence) to Orvieto and we can arrange transfers from there.

The train service in Italy is generally good and there are regular trains from Rome to Orvieto - fast trains take about an hour. For further information the International Rail website: www.internationalrail.com or check 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!)

Transfers by taxi from Rome or Orvieto to Santa Cristina can be arranged on request. Charges for these are payable locally - the cost Orvieto/Santa Cristina are approximately 150 Euros return (for max 2 people travelling together). For Rome/Santa Cristina the economy service is around 320 to 340 Euros return (max 2 people travelling together). Above prices are between 08.00 and 21.00. 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 transfer prices are subject to change at any time to reflect fuel costs).



GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas Italy is part of the Schengen area and if you hold a full British passport, you do not need a visa for visits to Schengen countries as a tourist as long as your combined visits to all Schengen area countries do not exceed 90 days in total in any 180 day period. Please check up to date requirements with your local Italian consulate.

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 (at a 'farmacia') will be qualified to give advice on minor ailments and to dispense prescriptions.

(DRAFT 24/11/2024)

