



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## ITALY

### TUSCANY & LAZIO 2025

#### RIDE INFORMATION

These rides explore the district south of Siena in Tuscany and the borders of the neighbouring provinces of Lazio and Umbria. This area is in the heart of Etruria, once one of the main centres for the Etruscan population, also famed for its wine production. The rides are organised with an experienced local operator, Andres Besson (also known as 'Duska') who has been guiding rides in this region for many years. He is a knowledgeable, easy going and relaxed riding companion, who will look after you well, although as he operates with a small team, usually with just one support assistant, you should not expect the service and polish that some of our other rides offer. Accommodation each night is at farm guesthouses and local village hotels, chosen for their location (so the horses can stay close by), atmosphere and hospitality. The rides are fun, good value and a wonderful, unique way to get to know this genuine, unspoilt part of rural Tuscany.



#### DATES

6 & 7 night rides are run from set dates, riding from village to village. Both routes begin at the hamlet of Sovana, with the first riding day taking you to the small village of Proceno. The Etruscan Ride then heads south-west to visit the Etruscan tombs at Vulci, while the Ridges of Siena Ride heads north to Radicofani fort and towards the iconic Val d'Orcia. Please see the set ride dates overleaf and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.

#### HORSES

The horses used for these rides are owned by Duska and are mixed breed, local Italian saddlebred crosses, some with Sicilian, Appaloosa, Andalucian or Arab blood. They are a medium build and most are between 15hh and 16hh. They are well looked after and are a responsive, forward going and thoroughly enjoyable ride. They are also sensible to handle, calm and surefooted but are as they are fit and generally of a fairly lively temperament, suit confident and reasonably experienced riders.

## TACK

Tack is English style, with leather or Wintec (or similar) general purpose saddles which are comfortable, although well used (don't expect tack to be gleaming!). Most of the horses are ridden in snaffles. Saddle blankets have large pockets with room for a water bottle, light raincoat, suncream etc.



## RIDING

The set itineraries include riding on 5 or 6 days. On the Ridges of Siena Ride there is usually 4 to 5 hours in the saddle on each riding day with one shorter day (morning ride only) at Radicofani. The Etruscan Ride usually has slightly longer hours, about 6 hours in all on most days with one shorter half day. Riding is broken up with stops for lunch and refreshments. Duska leads the rides personally and also takes care of the horses personally, preparing and tacking them up for you before riding - some help with untacking etc at the end of the day is always appreciated. When changing accommodation at night your luggage will be transported to the next night's hotel by support vehicle, which also meets the riding group at lunchtime. Rides are usually run for a minimum of 4, and groups are limited to a maximum of 7 or 8, although occasionally up to 10, guests.

## WEIGHT LIMIT

80 kgs / 12st 8lbs (clothed) but this does depend on riding experience and fitness. If you are close to this please call us to discuss and to check that a suitable horse is available.



## PACE

The pace of the rides is moderate overall, with good opportunities to trot and canter most days, although the pace always varies from day to day and will be limited by the terrain. Most of the faster riding is on the chalky white dirt tracks that criss-cross through this part of Italy. These offer firm, in places quite hard, but safe going that the horses are used to. There are also good opportunities to trot and canter when the going is flat and open, for instance when you cross agricultural land and ride through vineyards. There are some steep climbs and, when you ride on tarmac, or through hilly, wooded country and along narrow winding paths (old Etruscan trails) that can be stony, or on areas where the ground is uneven or where there may be holes, the pace will necessarily be slow.





## RIDING EXPERIENCE

The rides are for reasonably experienced, fit and confident riders who enjoy (and can manage) an energetic riding pace. As there is limited help, you should be able to mount a horse without assistance, be confident on and around horses and comfortable, relaxed and secure in the saddle at all paces from a walk to a fast canter. Also, as some of the ground is uneven, you should have an independent and balanced seat. There is no jumping on the rides, but some experience over low jumps is an advantage that you will find helps when riding over uneven terrain and up and down small hills. You should also be reasonably riding fit with a fairly good level of general fitness as there can be long periods of trot and canter. If you do not ride regularly at home we recommend you do so in the months and weeks before you go to get used to the hours in the saddle.



## GUIDING

Duska is an experienced riding guide, who has been leading rides in this area for many years. He is a quietly spoken, fun and easy-going companion who is hugely dedicated to what he does. He speaks fluent French and Italian and reasonable, although by no means fluent, English. If you ask, he will do his best to answer questions and help, and if you speak any Italian or French, he will be able to share more detailed information about the sights you see whilst riding. On the Etruscan Ride, he usually tries to arrange for a Park guide to join the group for half a day to tell more about the Etruscan history of the area and on both rides, if lucky, Pucci who lives at the castle in Proceno may give you a guided visit to the battlements. Duska carries a mobile 'phone and a first aid kit when riding and is in close contact with his assistant and support vehicle in case of emergency.

## TERRAIN

Much of the riding is on the old Etruscan roads, a network of 'white' dirt tracks that used to link the old settlements and are now used by occasional farm vehicles. You may also ride through forest, along wooded tracks, across gentle grass covered clay hills, up and down steeper hills with rocky canyons and along narrow, stony paths and around vineyards. On some days you head across fairly open agricultural land with gentle undulating hills and good views across the valleys. There is some tarmac work every day, crossing roads, riding through local villages and in the vicinity of your hotels - most roads are very quiet but you occasionally have to cross busier roads. You may also be asked to get off from time to time to lead the horses over rough or stony ground.

## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is in a combination of traditional country or farm guesthouses ('agriturismos') and small village hotels. Bedrooms, all of which are different (and may be in small 'apartments' with a separate sitting area / kitchenette), are simple and traditionally furnished usually with wrought iron or wood framed beds (in some cases rooms have a double bed and one or two single beds), terracotta tiled floors, bed side table and perhaps a wardrobe. They have a small private bathroom with loo and shower and, although simple, are reasonably comfortable. Several of the lodgings have swimming pools. One or two nights (depending on itinerary) are spent at the old castle in Proceno, a 12th century fortress with guest rooms, owned by a charming octogenarian lady whose family have lived in the castle for three centuries. It is historic and characterful; rooms may be dated, some quite dark, but what it lacks in light and modern facilities is made up by its position and history. Depending on availability the first and / or last nights of all rides are at the 4\* Sovana Resort which is set in its own expansive grounds with swimming pool. If this is not available, you will stay at the smaller and simpler Scilla Hotel in the heart of the village, with access to the Resort grounds. Other nights are in local 'agritourism' guesthouses, with one night on the Etruscan Ride in the simplest accommodation, a local farm hostel close to Lake Mezzano with basic guestrooms. Rates assume twin share but single rooms can usually be arranged on request for a supplement (although the number of available singles may be limited).



## MEALS

All meals are included and, as expected in rural Italy, you will be well fed. Breakfast each day is served at your guest house and is simple in the Italian style - generally bread, butter and jam or brioche or a sweet cake perhaps with ham, cheese or yoghurt, with tea or coffee to drink. Lunches are simple picnics, eaten at a table set up in the countryside when you are out riding - there might be a cold pasta salad or rice dish, with fresh bread, locally produced cheese, salami or ham, home preserved olives and / or a tomato salad, with fruit and coffee to finish. Dinner on all rides is either at your guesthouse or at a local restaurant, usually with a three or four course set menu or, at restaurants, sometimes choices from the menu. Typically you might start with crostini and mushrooms, olives or fresh tomatoes, or perhaps a plate of antipasta - locally produced salamis and hams. There is then usually a pasta course, with different varieties of homemade pasta or perhaps a local pasta and bean soup, or vegetables (as is normal in rural Italy) often served separately, then a main meat dish. Game, including wild boar, rabbit and guinea fowl are often served, or local beef or lamb. Fresh fruit or a traditional cake may be offered to end the meal. Local wines, water and coffee are included with dinner.



## WEATHER

Rides are run from March to October, except in August when it is usually too hot. The climate in early spring is generally mild, although March can still be cold with daytime temperatures about 5 to 10C and nights sometimes dropping below freezing. By early April, it is usually warming up, around 15C or sometimes a little more in the day. Daytime temperatures in May / June are usually in the mid 20s C and this is a lovely time for riding with wildflowers, poppies and sunflowers at their best in June. July and August are expected to 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 and October it is usually around 20C in the day, with all the colours of the harvest, fruit ripening and mushrooms growing. It can rain at anytime - more likely in spring and autumn, but even then rarely persistent.

## WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.





## ITINERARIES

The following is an example itinerary for the Ridges of Siena ride - please ask for the Etruscan Ride itinerary. Please also note that this is only an example and the route and day by day arrangements may be varied, or run in reverse, at your guide's discretion if the weather or other local conditions or circumstances require.

### Example Itinerary - Ridges of Siena Ride

**Day 1** - Own arrangements to make your way to Sovana (we can supply contact numbers for a local transfer company to help arrange transfers, either from Rome airport which takes about 2 hours, or from Orvieto train station, about an hour's drive). Meet your guide for a welcome dinner. Night at the hotel in Sovana. (D)

**Day 2** - Breakfast and a short drive (about 10 mins) to meet the horses. After horses are allocated and everyone is comfortable, set off riding towards Proceno following an ancient and scenic route. Stop for a picnic at Castell' Ottieri, a medieval citadel with a beautiful roman church (San Rocco). In the afternoon ride on, crossing from Tuscany into the region of Lazio, to arrive at the village of Proceno in the late afternoon. The night in simple guestrooms at the ancient castle, which has a swimming pool and lovely views over the town, with the horses in a field close by. Dinner and night Castello di Proceno. (B,L,D)



**Day 3** - Breakfast and the journey continues with spectacular views as you ride in the direction of Radicofani, a beautiful hilltop village with a fortress close by. After 3 to 4 hours' riding, cross back into Tuscany again and enter the province of Siena, known for its yellow hills and Cyprus trees. The route takes you up and down hills, across rivers and along ridges, the Crete Senese, where there are wonderful 360° views. Stop for a picnic lunch with a view dominated by the still distant Radicofani, with its fortress that was unassailable during the battles between the Duchy of Tuscany and the Pontifical state. In the late afternoon finally arrive at Radicofani, passing Celle sul Rigo (a small medieval village where you may stop for an ice cream) and head to Agriturismo Sterposi, a simple 'agritourism' guesthouse. Dinner here is often locally caught and cooked - perhaps wild boar your host Antonello has hunted and pasta freshly made by his wife. (B,L,D)

**Day 4** - A shorter day today setting off at around 10:00. First cross the village of Radicofani and then head down through typical Sienese hills and forest, before climbing the hill towards the fortress of Radicofani with its 360° view of the famous 'Val D'Orcia'. Stop here for a picnic lunch. In the afternoon a ride of about an hour takes you back to your lodgings and there will be time to visit Radicofani on foot, or to relax and swim in the pool. Dinner and night Agriturismo Sterposi. (B,L,D)





## ITINERARY cont.

**Day 5** - Today's ride heads back by a different route through the Crete Senese, up and down gentle hills, past wheat fields and a reservoir. Carrying on downhill, you pass several abandoned farmhouses and fields to reach the border of Lazio and Tuscany in Cetona, close to the Via Francene. Stop for lunch on the banks of the River Paglia where there may be a chance to swim (occasionally if the river is too full to cross, you may ride a different route with more roadwork). Then, after lunch, the final part of the route heads uphill again, taking you back to Proceno. Dinner is usually in the restaurant below the castle walls, close to the swimming pool and surrounded by lovely gardens. Overnight at Castello di Proceno. (B,L,D)



**Day 6** - The final days ride takes you back to Sovana, heading first in the direction of **San Quirico** and passing the tiny farming town of Prato Lungo. Lunch is a picnic in Vitozza (the Archaeological park Città del Tufo, an Etruscan necropolis where there are 200 caves to visit, the remains of a Roman church and of an ancient fortress). After lunch continue riding alongside the river through ancient forest until you arrive close to Sorano, a medieval town built in an impressive situation on a cliff. Let the horses drink from the Lente River then follow an old Etruscan road through a gorge with views of Sorano. Climbing to the plateau there is time for a last canter back to the field where the horses stay. After untacking and turning the horses out for a well-deserved rest, a short drive back to the hotel in Sovana (Sovana Resort or Scilla Hotel). A farewell dinner in the village and night at Sovana (B,L,D).



**Day 7** - Breakfast and own arrangements for onward travel. (B)



## DATES & RATES 2025

**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.**

### **Ridges of Siena (6 nights) - 1880 Euros per person**

Single room supplement 250 Euros

6th to 12th April

13th to 19th April

4th to 10th May

6th to 12th July

7th to 13th September

28th September to 4th October

5th to 11th October

19th to 25th October

### **Etruscan Ride (7 nights) - 2100 Euros per person**

Single room supplement 300 Euros

27th April to 4th May

11th to 18th May

25th May to 1st June

8th to 15th June

22nd to 29th June

13th to 20th July

14th to 21st September

Rates **INCLUDE** 6 or 7 nights' twin accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, back up vehicle and support, meals (dinner first day to breakfast last day), local wine and mineral water with lunch and dinner. Rates **EXCLUDE** International flights to Italy and taxes, transfers between your arrival / departing airport and Sovana (the start / end point of the ride), 'premium' (label) wines, and extra drinks whilst riding, personal medical / travel insurance (which all riders *must* have), supplements for a single room, any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave.

PLEASE NOTE that rates generally assume a minimum of 4 riders on each trip and rides may not be confirmed until we have at least 4 riders booked. Please call to check numbers / discuss

**Single supplements** - Please also note that if you book alone, you will need to pay the supplement for a single room. This will be charged on ALL single bookings. However if you are prepared to share a twin room with another rider (of the same sex) please let us know and we will see if we can find a sharer. If we find someone willing to share, the supplement will be refunded. We cannot guarantee finding a sharer as it depends on another guest wishing to share a room.



## FLIGHTS & TRAVEL

The closest international airport to Sovana, the meeting point, is Rome's Fiumicino airport, with the smaller Rome Ciampino also an easy drive of around 2 hours. There are several daily flights between London and Rome - British Airways and Al Italia fly to Rome Fiumicino airport; Easy Jet and Ryan Air fly from London and regional UK airports to Rome Ciampino airport. British Airways also fly daily to from London to Pisa (about 3 ½ hours drive from Sovana) and Easy Jet and Ryan Air have flights to Pisa from several regional airports.

**Transfers from Rome to Sovana** You will need to arrange your own transfer to Sovana. On request we can supply details of a local taxi / transfer company who offer transfers from Rome or Orvieto (see below); their transfer charges are payable direct (cost from Rome to Sovana is usually around 200 to 300 Euros each way (per vehicle taking 2 - 3 passengers); Orvieto/Sovana is usually around 120 Euros each way).

The train service in Italy is generally good and there are regular trains from Rome to Orvieto which is about an hour's drive from Sovana. The fast trains take about an hour. For further information on trains and train times try International Rail (<https://www.internationalrail.com/> on 0871 231 0790) or look at the Italian train website - [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com). (N.B. If and when booking a train to Orvieto please do not book the extra funicular service to the centre of Orvieto as any taxi will normally meet you 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!)

It is also possible to hire a car and drive yourself to Sovana. We can supply directions, which are quite straightforward from Rome. Your car can be left safely in Sovana whilst you are riding.

## 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, but it is recommended that you are up to date with the routine vaccine schedule as advised in the UK. If you have a particular condition requiring special medical treatment, in case of emergencies it is wise to carry a letter from your own doctor translated into Italian describing your condition and the medicine / treatment required.

**(DRAFT 17/10/2024)**

