

ITALY - CASTELLARE DI TONDA - MEDIEVAL TUSCANY

ITINERARY

Day 1

We can arrange transfers from Pisa or Florence airports. Alternatively you may prefer to hire a car at the airport. A rental car is recommended for the Heart of Tuscany programme.

Please note that some transfers may be shared if there are other guests arriving at a similar time.

Check-in to your apartment is usually from 16:00 and check out on the day of departure is by 10:00. Please note that the reception at Castellare di Tonda closes at 19:00 therefore we recommend your flight arrives no later than 17:00.

Collections/Drop offs are also possible in Florence and Pisa city but not in the 'restricted areas'.

Transfers need to be booked as early as possible as they are subject to availability. Any cancellations within two weeks of travel will incur full payment for transfers.

On arrival settle into your apartment and relax before dinner which is available from 6.30pm in the on-site Castellare Cucina restaurant. You will meet your riding guide on Sunday morning and they will re-confirm your itinerary for the week.

Please note that the below itinerary may change depending on the weather at the time, the riders and other local conditions, but always with your best interests in mind.

Accommodation is in Tuscan-style self-catering apartments built into each of the twelve beautifully restored farmhouses around the estate.



Scattered around the estate like a hamlet, each farmhouse of apartments is distinctly different, ranging from smaller farmhouses with two apartments up to larger properties with ten or more apartments. Each farmhouse has its own unheated swimming pool. The pools are usually open from mid-May to mid-October. If the weather permits, they may be open at other times.



Couples have a one bed roomed apartment, whilst friends can have either a twin room or a single room each in a two bedroomed apartment with a shared bathroom. Families can have a two or three bedroomed apartment.



Single travellers can guarantee a single one bedroom apartment by paying a single supplement. If you are willing to share, and a sharer is available, there is no single supplement for a single room in a shared apartment with shared bathroom. The supplement is payable in advance and refunded when we find you a sharer.

Day 2

Your first ride starts in the arena usually followed by a short ride through the estate. This morning is a quiet ride giving you the opportunity to get to know your horse and to feel comfortable with the style of riding.



Lunch is to your own account today.

In the afternoon ride through the estate, with more chances for slightly faster riding. Back at base untack and wash off your horse (your guide will be on hand should you require assistance with this).

Day 3

Today you go on a full day ride.

This could be to San Vivaldo Monastery, riding down through tufo sand trails bordered by Tuscan vineyards and open fields. Ride into the Bosco Gucci, a protected forest rich with local fauna and some impressive three hundred year old trees. The trail leads down into the San Vivaldo reserve, passing through old logging trails cut into the middle of pristine forests. This ride has some spectacular views of the rolling hills and passes the medieval ruins of Vignale borgo and Vignale castle.



Stop for lunch at a shaded picnic spot above the Monastery.

Later ride through a local Cinta Senese pig farm and twist and wind back through forest trails to Castellare di Tonda.

Day 4

Another full day ride today. This time perhaps to the old Barbialla estate.

The trail starts by winding up through forest trails until you reach the village of Sughera. Ride through the outskirts of the village, and then over the confines between Pisa and Florence into the Barbialla game reserve. Here the terrain opens up, and the views reach out as far as Volterra and San Miniato. There may be a chance for some lovely canters.



Have lunch beside an old abandoned Tuscan farmhouse before riding back to Castellare di Tonda.

Day 5

Today the horses have a rest day.

You could ask reception to book a taxi to take you to Castelfiorentino train station where you can catch the regional train to either Siena or Florence. These transfers are payable locally and subject to availability. Lunch is to your own account today.



Day 6

Today's ride may take you through long stretches of Chianti vineyards and then down into the Egola valley before winding your way through forests and vineyards and stopping at the lake on the estate for lunch.



In the afternoon continue to the oil press on the neighbouring Castelfalfi estate and then meander through the forests of the Carfalo valley. This is a predominantly wooded area which is home to plants and animals of an impressive biological diversity, such as a rare species of salamander found only in this area.

Day 7

This morning's ride could pass through open vineyards, fields and thick shaded forests that wind past pretty Tuscan stone farmhouses.



Lunch is to your own account today.

On your final afternoon ride you may enjoy some relaxing canters through the estate, finishing the week back at Castellare di Tonda.