

# ITALY - SICILIAN TRAILS - DEEP SICILY TRAIL

## ITINERARY

### Day 1

Transfers are included from Palermo airport on arrival day and to Catania airport on departure day.

On arrival day, your flight should arrive into Palermo between 11.00 and 17.00 so that you don't miss the first dinner. Please note that transfers are shared and you may have to wait for others arriving on slightly later flights, but no longer than 1.5 hours. The journey from the airport to the start of the ride takes around 1 hour 40 minutes.

On departure day your flight should depart from Catania between 11.00 and 17.00. Lunch is not included on this day. The journey back to the airport takes around 1 hour 30 minutes. These transfers are also grouped for people departing at approximately the same time.

Private transfers can also be arranged for an additional cost if you wish to fly in and out of the same airport.

If you are on a connecting flight, please ensure you have at least 1.5 hours in transit (unless you are travelling with hand luggage only).

Overnight Casa Il Bosco. Arrive at Casa Il Bosco in time for dinner.

This charming, restored nineteenth century country house is surrounded by the wilderness of Madonie Park.

There are 6 guest rooms in total. Most are double or twin rooms, with one triple room. The triple room is a self contained apartment with a mezzanine floor. There are usually two rooms used for single occupancy, which share a bathroom.



Casa Il Bosco



A twin room at Casa Il Bosco

## Day 2

The following is the planned itinerary. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to local conditions such as weather. The overnight stops may change but these changes are always with your best interests in mind.

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. Continue through woods of holm oak, cork and downy oak to the territory of Isnello.



After a picnic lunch, begin the 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.

Overnight Rifugio Marini. This 18-room mountain refugio offers simple accommodation. The rooms may have bunks in them, but they will be used for double, twin and single occupancy. Each room has its own bathroom.

If you have paid the single supplement, you will have your own room and bathroom.



One of the rooms at Rifugio Marini

### **Day 3**

Set off at about 08.30 in the morning, riding along paths and lanes through the park to reach Portela Mandarini, an important crossroad between ancient transhumance routes through the mountains. Later ride through a wild and

unspoilt area to arrive above Geraci Siculo, a medieval hilltop town, and one of the highest in the province of Palermo. From there admire spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, where you will stop for a picnic lunch.

In the afternoon descend along an ancient 'trazzera' to reach the valley of the river Rainò, tributary of the River Pollina, on the eastern boundary of the Madonie Park. Spend tonight at Agriturismo Casalvecchio and enjoy a delicious dinner prepared with produce straight from the farm.



Overnight Casalvecchio Geraci. This farmhouse on the edge of Madonie Park dates from the 1800s and has been restored as an agriturismo.

There are usually two rooms used for single occupancy, which share a bathroom.

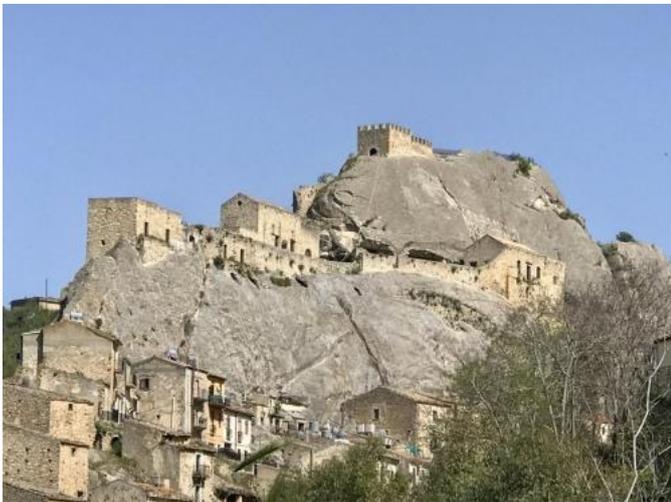




One of the bedrooms at Casalvecchio

## Day 4

After breakfast, set off at around 8.30 in the morning. Ride through pastures and along old pathways with beautiful views towards the centre of Sicily, before entering peaceful woods and stopping for a picnic lunch.



In the afternoon, you head on through farmland to the village of Sperlinga, a fascinating place characterised by troglodyte dwellings, some of which are still in use today, and its unique castle, which is carved into the rock.

Overnight Baglio San Pietro. This restored farmhouse sits on the edge of the town of Nicosia, one of the most important towns in the province of Enna.



Pool at Baglio San Pietro



Baglio San Pietro

## Day 5

After breakfast, you will head off at around 8.30 in the morning. Begin the day by descending into the valley of the Salso Cimarosa River, which you will then follow, immersed in unspoilt nature and surrounded by the impressive peaks of the Erean Mountains. Stop for a picnic lunch near the small town of Nissoria.

For most of the afternoon's ride, you will follow an old railway line, out of use since the 1950s. Take the railway line to the town of Assoro, crossing impressive bridges, before winding down on the other side of the town through dramatic scenery and passing through several tunnels.



Overnight Agriturismo Lo Sperone. This is old farmstead which has been restored, surrounded by citrus groves and equipped with a swimming pool.



## Day 6

Leave the farm at about 8.00 in the morning and cross rolling hills, riding through endless fields of grain and forage. You will reach the breath-taking and little-known Castello di Pietratagliata, a castle perched precariously atop a jagged rock, first documented in the fourteenth century, whose origins are shrouded in mystery and legend.

Here for a picnic lunch, before riding on through rolling farmland to reach the accommodation for the night.



Overnight Torre di Renda. Torre di Renda is an old structure which was formerly the local bishop's residence, equipped with a swimming pool. The hotel is in the territory of the famous medieval town of Piazza Armerina.



Torre di Renda



Pool at Torre di Renda



One of the bedrooms at Torre di Renda

## Day 7

After breakfast, leave the hotel at around 8.00 in the morning and descend a scenic valley to arrive after about one hour at the Villa Romana del Casale, one of the most important historical sites in Sicily and boasting around 3500m<sup>2</sup> of spectacular mosaics dating from the fourth century.



After visiting the Villa Romana, ride north through rolling farmland and stop for a picnic lunch in the woods. In the afternoon, ride through peaceful eucalyptus forests and reach the Lake of the Olivo Dam.



Continue through woods, followed by rolling fields of wheat and hay, to reach Agriturismo Il Mandorleto, based in an old agricultural hamlet and famous for its production of almonds, one of the most important ingredients in Sicily's culinary tradition. Delicious dinner and overnight.

Overnight Agriturismo Il Mandorleto. This hotel is situated in an old agricultural hamlet, famous for its production of almonds - one of the key ingredients in Sicily's culinary traditions.



A bedroom at Il Mandorleto