



Tour of Etna – 6 Days

A fantastic six-day circular trail around Europe's highest active volcano, Mount Etna.

Day 1: Arrival

You will arrive at *Castiglione di Sicilia*, where the horses are based, complete with wonderful views of Mount Etna.

Day 2: Castiglione di Sicilia – A Barunissa (hours of riding: 5)

After breakfast, we will set off from Castiglione di Sicilia at around 9.00 in the morning and ride towards the Alcantara River and the Little Gorges of Castiglione, passing the Cuba Bizantina (a unique place of worship constructed in the seventeenth century). We will then follow the valley, crossing the Alcantara Natural Park, until we reach the area surrounding Mojo. Here we will stop for a picnic lunch, before setting off again towards our accommodation for the night, [A Barunissa](#), immersed in woods, where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 3: A Barunissa – La Fucina di Vulcano (hours of riding: 5)

We will have breakfast and leave our accommodation at around 8.30 in the morning and begin the day riding up the volcano's north-eastern side, through forests of oak and chestnut, Etna's native broom (*genista aetnensis*, a species which grows to impressive heights and releases an intense perfume when it is in bloom with its yellow flowers between May and September), and finally beech trees when we reach the Pista Altomontana near Monte Santa Maria. We will follow the Pista Altomontana until we reach Monte Spagnolo, and after crossing the lava flow from 1981 and its "Hornitos" (small holes that opened up during the eruption, whose name derives from the Spanish word for little ovens), we will stop for a picnic lunch. After lunch we will descend on the western slopes towards our accommodation, [La Fucina di Vulcano](#), a comfortable hotel with magnificent views of Etna's western side, where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 4: La Fucina di Vulcano – Villa Dorata (hours of riding: 5)

After breakfast, we will leave La Fucina di Vulcano at around 8.30 in the morning, and climb once again up Etna's western slopes, to the Pista Altomontana, which we will join in the vicinity of Monte Scavo and follow through forests of beech and conifer trees, crossing more recent lava flows. When visibility is good, you can enjoy breath-taking views of half of Sicily and Etna's western side from here, and it is also possible to enjoy some excellent gallops along this part of the trail. We will stop for a picnic lunch near the Galvarina refuge and arrive later in the afternoon at the [Villa Dorata](#), a beautiful villa with views of the gulf of Catania, where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 5: Villa Dorata - Etna Mille77 (hours of riding: 6)

We will have breakfast and set off at about 7:30 in the morning. Having left our hotel, we will start to climb towards the *Rifugio Sapienza*, Etna's most visited site, from where tourists can take a cable car to the summit of the volcano, and which becomes a ski resort in the winter. Once we reach an altitude of around 2000 metres, you can admire the "*mouth*" of the 2001 eruption, from which millions of metres cubed of lava erupted and engulfed almost all of the buildings and roads on Etna's southern side, flowing right down to the foot of the volcano. We will then pass through the

middle of the *Silvestri craters*, created during a major eruption at the end of the nineteenth century, and nicknamed the "*bottoniera*" because they follow a fracture line like the buttons on a shirt. We will then descend along very challenging paths across lava flows from various older and more recent eruptions and through dense woods, before arriving in the territory of *Zafferana Etnea*, famous for producing honey. We will stop for the night at the [B&B Etna Mille77](#), a beautiful house with sea views, where we will also have our evening meal.

Day 6: Etna Mille77 – Chalet Clan dei Ragazzi (hours of riding: 6)

We will have breakfast and set off at about 9.00 in the morning. We will begin by climbing Etna's north-eastern side through oak forests, passing the famous Ilici du Carrinnu, huge trees which are centuries-old. We will then ride along the edge of the Valle del Bove, a famous depression in the landscape into which all of the lava from eruptions on the eastern side of the volcano flows. After a picnic lunch we will set off again, climbing until we reach the impressive Sartorius craters, created during a major lateral eruption in 1865. We will then descend through forests of birch and beech trees, before finally arriving at the Ragabo pine forest with its giant pine trees and our accommodation, the [Chalet Clan dei Ragazzi](#), where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 7: Chalet Clan dei Ragazzi – Castiglione di Sicilia (hours of riding: 6)

After breakfast we will leave the chalet at around 9.00 in the morning and begin by climbing up through the pine forest to the Piano Provenzana, a well-known ski resort, where we will begin to climb a series of tracks and paths set in a moon-like landscape, passing through the site of the last major eruption of 2002. We will ride along the craters that were formed on 26 October of that year, before riding around Monte Nero, and stopping for a picnic lunch near the Timpa Rossa refuge, immersed in a beech forest which is among those found the furthest south in the Northern hemisphere. We will then begin our descent on Etna's north side, through a variety of forests, until we reach the vineyards around Solicchiata. Finally, we will arrive back at our starting point, where we will have dinner and spend the night.

Day 8: Departure

Today we will transfer you to the airport (or another location on the island, as requested).

Prices:

€1750 per person for a double room.

€2000 per person for a single room.

The price includes six days of riding with an English speaking equestrian / local culture guide, seven nights in comfortable accommodation with a full dinner and breakfast, luggage transport by support vehicle, transfer from/to the airport, six picnic lunches, insurance, and chaps / riding hat rental (if required).

Level: Comfortable at all three paces (walk, trot and canter), with experience of hacking out in the open.

Age requirements: 16 years old and above.

Group size: Nine people maximum.

Key information / requirements: Between five and six hours in the saddle per day. You must be comfortable at all three paces (walk, trot and canter). You must be physically fit. This programme is aimed at intermediate and advanced riders and it is not suitable for beginners or riders with only limited experience. The terrain is varied and there may be long trots and gallops along the way.

Equipment: It is possible to hire riding hats and chaps on site. The following items are essential: waterproofs, layers (it can be cold at altitude), boots and chaps, and sun cream.

Weight: Max 90 kg.

Accommodation: Agriturismo or 3* good quality hotels, and one night in a comfortable chalet.

Themes: Mountains, forests, flora, fauna, lava flows, craters, history, mythology, agriculture, views.

Meals: Picnic lunches, typical Sicilian dinner in the evening (minimum four courses).

Refined Sicilian cuisine prepared with local produce. Evening meals include: starter, pasta course, meat / main course, dessert, wine, water and digestif (liqueur, grappa, limoncello or other available options), coffee or tea. Continental or American-style breakfasts on request. For groups of four or more riders, picnic lunches are provided by support vehicle (together with tables, chairs and cutlery) and include: fresh bread, salad, cheeses, olives, charcuterie, Sicilian specialities, wine or other drinks on request, coffee or tea. For groups of less than four riders, picnic lunches consist of sandwiches and fruit (carried in saddlebags).

Languages spoken: English, French, Italian, Spanish, Sicilian.

Horses: 14 horses of Sicilian breeding, all well trained and accustomed to the terrain. The horses live out at pasture. The guide cleans, grooms and tacks up the horses.

Tack: Comfortable English saddles, with a sheepskin cover, or Western saddles on request. All horses are ridden with a martingale and a crupper.

Luggage transport: By support vehicle.

Optional additional activities: Swimming pool, walks, massages, guided tours of towns and historical sites with a local guide.

Nearby towns and places of interest: Etna Natural Park, Alcantara Natural Park, Nebrodi Natural Park, Castiglione di Sicilia, Zafferana Etnea, Nicolosi, Ragalna, Belpasso, Randazzo, Bronte, Catania, Taormina.

Airport: Catania.

Transfers from/to the airport: Included in the programme price.

Logistical base: [Le Terre di Castel Leone](#).