



Italy

Destination Guide


Contents

Italy has coastal cities and towns along the Mediterranean Sea in the south, snow capped mountains in the northern end, and rolling hills, pristine beaches and bustling cities all throughout the country. It's easy to see why Italy is a dream European holiday destination. Discover the ancient ruins, fine museums, magnificent artworks and incredible architecture, along with century old traditions, intriguing festivals and wonderful culture.

With so much to see and do, a self drive holiday is the perfect way to see as much of Italy as you wish at your own pace. Italy has an excellent road and highway network that allows visitors to enjoy all the famous sites, as well as some of the lesser known treasures of this European nation. In this guide, Auto Europe have included all the information you'll need for a self drive holiday in Italy. From hiring a car and rules of the road, to some great ideas for touring the different regions of Italy, our Driving Guide is the first step to planning your Italian holiday!

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Renting a Car in Italy

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain	Examples: ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon	E = Electric Air
		R= Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Ute		
		X = Special		
		E = Executive		

What kind of car should I rent for my holiday in Italy?

There are plenty of car rental options to choose from depending on your needs. Consider where you're travelling, how many people are travelling and the style of driving you intend to do. You can use the ACRISS system detailed above to find the car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognised code that will ensure that you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Automatic and Manual Transmission

Automatic cars are available in Italy, however they will be more expensive than manual cars and not as readily available.

Collecting at an airport in Italy

At most Italian airports, rental companies will have a desk in the arrivals hall and vehicles will be located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. Usually a courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. Auto Europe South Africa offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location/airport fees that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

Motorhome Rental

Enjoy the convenience of accommodation and transport in one. Auto Europe offers motorhomes for up to six people with collection points across Italy.

Do I need a credit card?

Yes. Car rental suppliers will usually freeze the excess of the vehicle (from €600), which will be refunded when the hire car is returned at the end of the rental period.

Can I collect my rental car in one Italian city and drop it off in another Italian city?

Yes, this is certainly possible, however in most cases there will be a one-way fee payable when you collect your rental. Check with Auto Europe South Africa before you travel to find out any additional costs.



Rental Vehicle Insurance

Italian law requires all vehicles to have Compulsory Third Party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately, and an excess may be due.

Car Rental companies in Italy will normally include:

- **Third Party insurance** and compulsory insurance will be included in your car hire rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle, and is normally included in the prepaid car hire rates. Rentals are often subject to a liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car or by taking out **Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance**.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is usually included in the prepaid car hire rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car.

Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance. However, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU\$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in case of an accident. To find out more, simply call Auto Europe on 1300 656 601 or visit the [Auto Europe website](#).

The Auto Europe Hire Car Excess Refund Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving in Italy

Licence Requirements

An International Driving licence is required for South Africa Drivers Licence holders. Contact your local motoring association for further information. Make sure that you take your South Africa licence with you as well. Car rental companies will require that drivers have held a full licence for at least one year.

Min & Max Age Requirements

Minimum Driving Age: The minimum age to rent a car in Portugal is usually 21, though some suppliers allow drivers from 18 years but with a young driver's fee.

Young Driver's Surcharge: Drivers aged 18 years may be charged from €22 per day, drivers 19-24 years may be charged from €15 per day.

Max Driving Age: Most car rental suppliers in Italy don't have a max driving age, however the max driving age for some car hire companies is 75 years. In these cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with Auto Europe South Africa for further details.

Road Tolls & e-Tags

The Autostrada system is privately owned and drivers must pay tolls. Collect a ticket upon entering the Autostrada, and pay the toll when you exit. When you approach an entrance of the Autostrada, drive to the gate marked 'Biglietto' (ticket), rather than the Telepass or Viacard gate. When you exit you can pay the toll with cash or a credit card.

Parking in Italy

Although parking may be hard to find in larger cities, parking is relatively easy to find everywhere else in Italy. In tourist areas there are usually parking lots in which you can pay to park. There are street signs designating parking and no parking zones.

Blue lines indicate pay parking and a pay and display ticket machine will be located nearby. White lines or no lines indicate free parking. If the parking sign indicates that the parking time is limited, you'll need to display a parking disc the windshield of your vehicle, which should include the time you parked. Parking discs are sometimes included in your car rental; if not they can be purchased from tobacconists. Ask for a "disco orario".



Driving in Italy



- When you collect your car rental, familiarise yourself with the car and its controls before you begin driving. Familiarise yourself with road signs and parking rules, use child safety seats when necessary and always carry your licence with you when you are driving.
- Drive on the **right** hand side of the road. The driver sits on the left hand side of the car. On multi-lane roads, slower traffic sits in the right lane and lanes to the left are used for overtaking.

Driving Laws in Italy

- Drivers must carry proof of insurance, international and domestic drivers licences and registration papers at all times.
- The maximum speed limit is 130km/hr on the Autostrada, and 110km/hr when wet, and 50km/hr in cities regardless of weather conditions.
- Speed cameras are set up in many places. If you're caught speeding, the fine will be posted to the car rental company, who will pay the fine with the credit card used at the time of collection.
- Children under the age of four must be seated in approved child safety seats and children aged 4 to 12 years must be secured in a suitable child restraint.
- When driving on the Autostrada, you must drive with your headlights on.
- It is illegal to talk on a mobile phone while driving in Italy.
- Drink driving is illegal. The maximum blood alcohol level is 0.05 and DUI drivers can face hefty fines or imprisonment.

Road Signs

Many European countries now follow the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals, where signals and signage are standardised, which make them easier to understand for tourists and locals alike. A few to note are as follows:

Parking areas: Big blue square with a white P in the centre

No Parking: Circular sign with a red border and red diagonal slash through the middle and a blue background

Do not enter: Red circle with a white horizontal bar through the middle

No Vehicles Allowed: White and round with a red circle around the border

One Way: Rectangular sign with an arrow pointing out the appropriate direction and the words *senso unico* in the arrow

No Passing: Round white sign with a red border and tow cars in the centre, the right car is black and the left car is red.

Can I visit another country and then return the car to Italy?

In most cases, travel to other countries is permitted, though it depends on the vehicle you're driving and the country that you'll be visiting. Check with Auto Europe South Africa for further details.

Can I collect my rental car in Italy and drop it off in another European country?

Yes, but be aware that an international one way fee will be charged upon collection. This is dependant on the country and the distance from the collection point. Auto Europe South Africa will advise of any international one way fees at the time of booking.

Since cars cannot be taken into Venice, where is the best place to pick up, drop off or park my rental car when I visit?

Auto Europe South Africa has car hire depots in Venice's Piazzale Roma, which is opposite the ferry terminal that will take you into Venice. Piazza Roma has a city owned parking station where you can safely leave your car.

Can I drive my rental vehicle in Cinque Terre?

There are some sections of the Cinque Terre where cars are not permitted. If you choose to travel to Cinque Terre, you may park your car outside the towns and explore these places on foot. Drive with caution and confidence on this route, as the roads are winding and narrow.

Can I extend my car rental in Italy after I have picked up the vehicle?

Yes, if you decide you would like to extend your rental, call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle and if the car is available to be extended. If they are able to assist, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.

Should I hire a GPS for driving in Italy?

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe South Africa. Our rates include the GPS, travel guide and entertainer. The GPS is delivered to your home before your departure. GPS units can also be requested directly through some suppliers, however this will be at their own rates. If time is short, or you would simply prefer to collect your

Italian Regions



Northwest Italy

Regions: Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy and Valle d'Aosta

Major cities: Milan, Turin, Portofino, Cinque Terre and Genoa

Northeast Italy

Regions: Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige and Veneto

Major cities: Venice, Bologna, Parma, Verona and Trieste

Central Italy

Regions: Lazio, Abruzzo, Marche, Tuscany and Umbria

Major cities: Rome, Florence, Siena, Pisa, Lucca, Assisi and Perugia

Southern Italy

Regions: Apulia, Basilicata, Campania and Molise.

Major cities: Naples, Pompeii, the Amalfi Coast, and Apulia

Sicily

Major cities: Palermo, Catania, Cefalù, Messina

Sardinia

Major cities: Cagliari, Sassari, Quartu Sant'Elena



Italy also surrounds two mini-states, the Vatican City and San Marino.

Rome



Rome is the capital city of Italy, situated on the river Tiber. The Eternal City of Rome was originally founded as a village in the 8th Century BC, ultimately earning the title, “Capitol of the World”. Although today it’s no longer *caput mundi*, Rome is a living masterpiece, rich in architectural and cultural beauty. It is a bustling, thriving and sometimes chaotic city, where modern day life blends in with ancient buildings and magnificent *dolce vita*.

Attractions

The Vatican – Home to the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church, See St Peter’s Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, St Peter’s Square and the Vatican City Gardens.

The Colosseum - The epitome of Roman architecture that was built in AD72

The Roman Forum - Once the religious, commercial and political centre of Ancient Rome

The Pantheon – One of Rome’s most well preserved ancient monuments, built as a temple in 27BC

Trevi Fountain – Toss a coin into Rome’s largest and most famous fountain to ensure a return to Rome

Villa d’Este – Enjoy a stroll through the landscaped gardens and mossy fountains in this famous Italian-styled garden in Tivoli, near Rome

Mangia! – Eat! Try some locally made gelato, pasta and pizza, then sip delicious coffee or wine at an outdoor café

Events

January

Epiphany Fair – A fair of toys and around the Bernini fountain; this is when many Italian children receive their Christmas presents

April

Good Friday Procession – A torch lit procession from the Colosseum re-enacting the 14 Stations of the Cross

May

May Day Musical – Rome celebrates the arrival of spring with fantastic music festival

June

Estate Romana Festival - Running through to September this festival offers music, film theatre and children’s fun

July

Donna Sotto le Stelle – Roman high fashion paraded on the Spanish Steps in the Piazza di Spagna

August

Feast of the Assumption – The streets of Rome come alive with dancing at the Gran Ballo di Ferragosto

October

Celebration of St. Francis – Rome celebrates its patron saint, St Francis, on this feast day

November

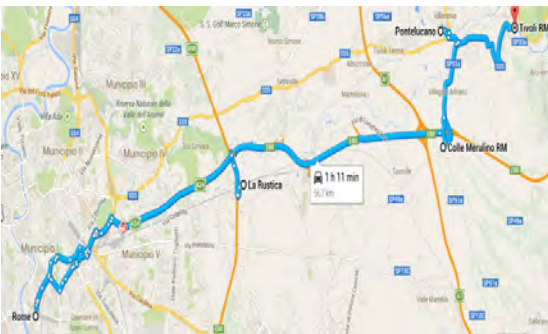
Rome Jazz Festival – Music festival dedicated to jazz that’s been running since 1876

Self Drive Tours from Rome



Rome to Tivoli

The drive from Rome to Tivoli is relatively short, and therefore easy to schedule as a day trip. Travel east from Rome toward La Rustica, and follow the Strada del Parchi until you reach Colle Merulino. Turn north onto the SP51 to Pontelucano, then east along the SS5 to Tivoli in the region of Lazio.

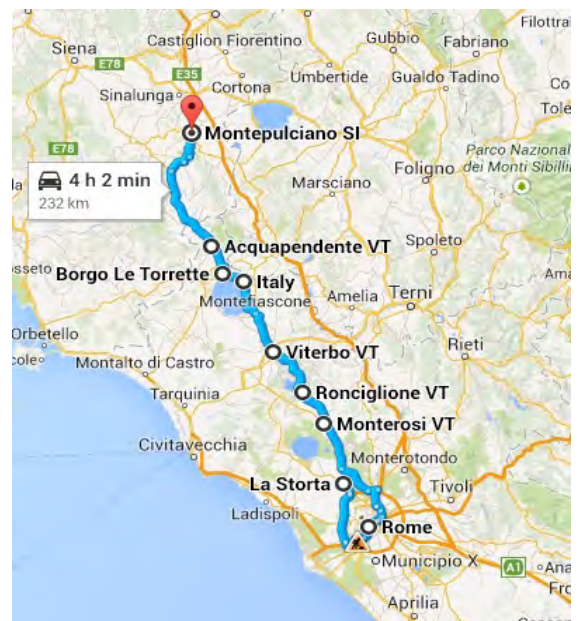


Tivoli is home to the Villa d'Este in the Piazza Trento. This is one of Italy's finest palaces, however one of the main reasons people come here is for the gardens. Ville d'Este is constructed with hundreds of water fountains and water features. Whilst in Tivoli, make some time to see the Hadrian's Villa, a magnificent complex incorporating lakes, fountains, baths, temples and gardens. If you get the chance make sure to see the other ancient monuments of the Temple of Tiburtine Sibyl and the Temple of Hercules.

Rome to Montepulciano, Tuscany

Tuscany is one of the finest regions of Italy, and is home to the ancient city of Montepulciano, which is located right in its centre. If you take the Autostrada, the drive from Rome is just over two hours. If you prefer to travel the magnificent countryside of Tuscany at a more leisurely pace, head north from Rome via the SS2. This will take you on a beautiful drive through La Storta, Le Rughe, Sette Vene, Monterosi and Ronciglione, which is in the Cimini Mountains and close to Punta del Lago. Head further north, stopping along the way at Viterbo whose historic centre is surrounded by medieval walls and is home to the Viterbo University and fantastic ancient architecture.

Further along the SS2 you'll come across the beautiful town of Montefiascone on the banks of Lake Bolsena, location of the incredible Saint Margherita's Cathedral. Head north around the lake to Bolsena, then on through San Lorenz Nuovo and Acquapendente, which is home to the Cathedral of San Sepolcro and some of Tuscany's greatest historical buildings. Enjoy the picturesque countryside and medieval villages along the way to Montepulciano, a beautiful town is set amongst vineyards and renowned for its art, architecture and exquisite lifestyle.





Northwest Italy

Northwest Italy is a unique and spectacular region, offering all the best for a wonderful holiday. Relax on the Italian Riviera, bask in the sun in crystal clear waters, wind through medieval towns with narrow cobble stoned streets, shop in the fashion capital of Italy, explore incredible historical sites, drive through vineyards over rolling hills, and ski, hike or bike over magnificent mountains.

Attractions

Lombardy

Explore Milan – See this financial and economic powerhouse city of Italy

Visit Lake Como – Enjoy all the water sports and leisure of this beautiful region

Explore Bergamo – Where modern and historic architecture stand side by side

Liguria

Drive along La Riviera di Ponente – Follow along the Ligurian coast from Genoa to Nice, France

Portofino – One of Italy's most exclusive seaside resorts

Cinque Terre – Visit a World Heritage Listed Site and now national park and see small coastal villages with unparalleled views of the Mediterranean

Explore the streets of Genoa – Wander through the *Caruggi* di Genoa, the old part of the city and get a taste of true Italian history

Piedmont

See the Museo Egizio, Turin – One of the world's largest Egyptian museums

Mole Antonelliana, Turin – Italy's National Cinema Museum, which was originally built as a synagogue

Ski the Italian Alps – The Milky Way is one of the world's most well renowned slopes

Valle d'Aosta

Sightsee – Visit Aosta Cathedral, Arch of Augustus and La Maison de la Fontina

Take a cable car ride – Glide over the Alps from Aosta to Chamonix for the best view of the region

Go hiking – Follow the hiking trails across some of Europe's most spectacular mountains including Matterhorn, near on the Swiss-Italian border

Events

January

San Remo Flower Festival - Known as Corso Fiorito, this colourful festival is hosted in San Remo, Liguria

Fiera di Sant'Orso - Hosted in Aosta, this is a 1,000 year old event attracts artisans, musical entertainment, food and wine

February

Fair of San Faustino & Giovita – Brecia's largest fair, hosting roughly 800 vendors in honour of its patron saints

March

Feast Day of St Joseph – A massive festival near the port of La Spezia, Liguria

April

St George Bonfire - A bonfire is hosted in the village square and locals in Portofino celebrate this feast day

May

Sagra del Pesce – Visitors flock to witness the locals pay homage to the patron saint of fisherman, St Fortunato, with a free event offering amazing fresh fish in Sagra del Pesce

September

Palio de Asti, Asti, Piedmont – Famous bare back horse race with medieval origins

November

Chocolate Fair – Market fair Italian chocolates in Turin

December

Christmas markets – Head to Borgo Dora, Turin for one of the best holiday markets in Italy

Regions

Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy & Valle d'Aosta



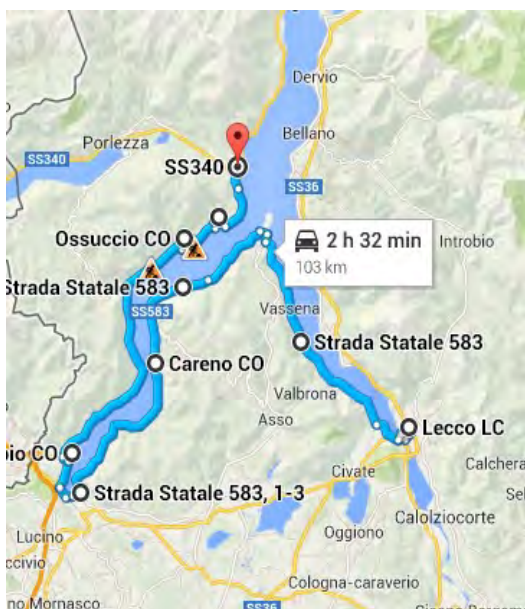
Tour the Alpine Valleys

Begin this tour in Ivrea just north of Turin and head toward the famous Carema vineyards. Continue further north to Point St Martin, where you'll be able to see an ancient Roman bridge. From here, travel east to Gaby and see the Neil Falls and further on to Gressoney la Trinite at the foot of Mount Rosa. Here you can take in great skiing or snowboarding in winter and fantastic hiking or water sports in the summer.

If you head west from Point St Martin, you'll come across Bard, etched into a deep narrow gorge at the head of the Aosta Valley. There's a magnificent fort and lovely cobbled streets to explore. Further along, you'll get to Verres, home to the Verres Castle which was built in the fourteenth century. Drive through Emarese and Brusson and you'll arrive at the ski resort of Champuloc, which is a quiet and pristine ski resort town on Mount Rosa.



Tour Lake Como



This route follows just one section of Lake Como, and should be handled with care, as the roads can be narrow and somewhat windy. Don't let this deter you, as it's well worth the effort. Begin the tour at Lecco and follow the SS583 through Moregge, Onno and Limonta to the town of Bellagio located at the tip of the peninsula that juts into Lake Como. This lovely town is one of the main tourist centres on the lake and the main centre for the lake's boat services. Follow the SS583 back down the west coast of the peninsula through Lezzeno, Careno and Blevio to the town of Como.

From Como, drive north again on the SS340 through Cernobbio, Ossuccio and Tremezzo to Mennagio. Mennagio is a little quieter than other towns along the lake, but has great restaurants, cafés and gelaterias.

Attractions

The Veneto

Venice – Walk along the canals, take a gondola ride and marvel at the Basilica di San Marco

Explore the homes of Romeo and Juliet – Visit Verona to see Casa Giuletta (Juliette's house), the enormous Verona Arena and the *Giardino do Palazzo Giusti*, one of the finest gardens in Italy

Trentino-Alto Adige

Ski in the Dolomites – Enjoy over 600km of ski runs and hundreds of cross country tracks

Explore the lakes region – Visit the beautiful Lake Garda and Lake of Carezza

Wine tasting – Drive to Meran, one of the best red wine producing regions in Italy, surrounded by glorious mountain ranges

Friuli-Venezia Giulia

Visit the Miramare Castle, Trieste – Built in the 18th Century and is positioned perfectly above the Adriatic Sea providing awe-inspiring views

Emilia-Romania

Indulge your gastronomic senses in Parma – Home to Parma ham and the original *parmigiano reggiano* (parmesan cheese)

Visit Europe's oldest university – Make sure to see the campus of Europe's oldest university, the University of Bologna

Enjoy ancient artworks – Drive to Ferrara and Ravenna to see magnificent Byzantine mosaics and the area's wonderful Renaissance centre

Events

January

Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti – Racing over 500km of icy roads, this Winter Marathon features historical cars built before 1968

February

Carnevale – Annual Mardi Gras festival with ornate masks, exquisite balls and festivals celebrated in many cities including Venice and Cento

Verona in Love – A five day festival over Valentine's Day, inspired by the story of Romeo and Juliet

March

Vinitaly - The Wine Festival, Verona – One of the largest wine exhibitions in the world featuring over 4,000 exhibitors and nearly 150,000 visitors

June

Prosciutto di San Daniele – A four day festival dedicated to food, particularly prosciutto, hosted in San Daniele, Friuli

September

Riviera Fiorita – A fantastic county fair emulating fairs of the Baroque period, complete with costumes and traditional foods

December

Christmas Fairs – Festive market stalls offer traditional crafts and food in towns across Northeast Italy

Regions

Emilia-Romania, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige and Veneto

Self Drive Tours: Northeast Italy



Explore the Dolomites

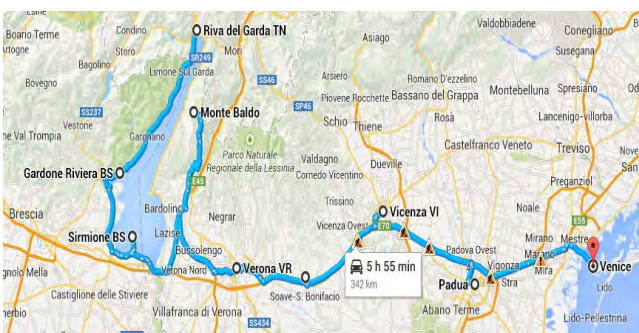
Travel from Venice to Belluno to see the best of the Dolomites. Use Belluno as your base to explore the spectacular Dolomite mountains, Go skiing, snowboarding, hiking or mountain biking – there's something for everyone in this fantastic region. Travel the fast way with the A27, which leads directly to Belluno, and will take just over an hour on the Autostrada.

If you'd like to travel at a slower pace, start in Venice and take the A27 to Casier then head west on the SR53 to Treviso. In Treviso, there are numerous of ancient ruins and gardens to explore. Advance onto the SR48 head northeast through Montebelluna and Pederobba, the continue on the SB1 through Vas, Capen and the beautiful town of Lentiai. Enjoy the winding roads, charming villages and magnificent mountain vistas all the way through Mei, Trichiana, Viscome and onto Belluno.



Lake Garda to Venice

Start in the unrivalled Lake Garda, one of the most beautiful lakes in all of Europe. This region offers splendid natural scenery and is a playground for people of all ages. Begin in Riva del Garda, then visit the village of Sirmione with its wonderful historical structures. From here, go hiking or climbing at Monte Baldo. Take the A4 east towards San Boniface to the sublime city of Verona, where you can visit the Verona Arena and the Castelvecchio. Saunter through Verona's streets to see what inspired Shakespeare to write Romeo and Juliet. After you have finished with Verona continue east to the magnificent wine districts of Valpolicella and Soave situated just outside of the city.



Further east, you'll come into Vicenza which has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Vicenza you'll be able to see the Basilica Palladiana, the Teatro Olimpico and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto. From here stop off in the beautiful Padua, reputed to be the oldest city in Northern Italy. Continue on to Venice and park your car just outside the city walls to enjoy the sights of the city on foot, or from the comfort of a romantic gondola ride.



Central Italy

Central Italy is home to some of the most iconic sites in the country: the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Michelangelo's David, the Tuscan countryside, the Colosseum, the Vatican City and more! The regions of Central Italy also offer magnificent mountains, rolling fields, beachside resorts, world famous cuisine, exceptional arts, architecture and culture. You'll never be short of something fun to do or something beautiful to see in Central Italy.

Attractions

Tuscany

Florence – See the work of some of the world's most famous artists, including Botticelli and Michelangelo

Pisa – Don't miss one of the true icons of Italy: The Leaning Tower of Pisa

Lucca – A beautiful old city that's home to great restaurants, lovely churches and a rich history hidden behind monumental Renaissance walls

Umbria

Perugia – Wander cobbled streets, walk under the Etruscan arch and visit the Duomo

Explore Assisi – See this magnificent hill town that was home to St Francis

Orvieto – Stop by this gorgeous cathedral in the city located right on the edge of a cliff

Explore the countryside – Stop in exquisite, ancient towns such as Gubbio, Spoleto and Spello

Abruzzo

National Parks – Go mountain climbing or hiking in Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga

Hit the slopes – Ski or snowboard any one of Abruzzo's many ski resorts

Le Marche

Visit Urbino – This university town is full of Renaissance art, history and very steep streets

Macerata and Ascoli Piceno – Ancient villages offering an abundance of culture, art and history

Soak up the sun – Visit the beachside resorts along the East Coast near Monte Conero and Pesaro

Events

March

La Festa degli Statuti - A medieval festival complete with costumes, music and plenty of food in Fossato de Vico, Perugia

May

Iris Garden of Florence Opening - For 19 days only, these magnificent gardens are open to the public

June

Spoleto Festival of the Two Worlds – A cultural festival in Umbria with an array of musical styles and dancing

July

Mercantia Festival – International gathering of street performers and artist set in the beautiful medieval town of Certaldo Alto, Florence

September

Sagrantino Wine Festival– A festival devoted to celebrate the local regions wines in Montefalco

Pane Nostrum – A three day festival dedicated to bread in Senigallia

October

Euro Chocolate Festival – This nine day festival attracts almost a million visitors annually to Perugia

December

Festa dell'olivo e Sagra della Bruschetta – A massive festival centred around olive oil and bruschetta

Regions

Lazio, Abruzzo, Marche, Tuscany and Umbria

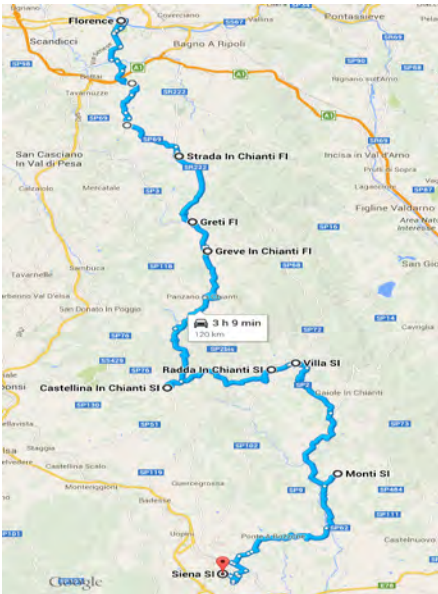
Self Drive Tours: Central Italy



Florence to Siena via The Chianti Valley

Take on the stunning Tuscan countryside on this lovely drive that takes just over three hours without stopping.

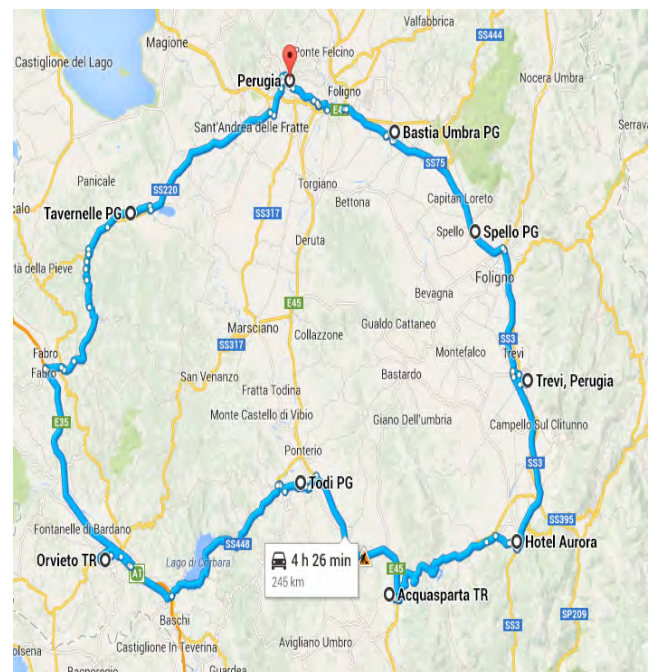
Follow the SR222 south from Florence and enjoy the scenery through Strada, Greti and Greve. Once you get to the town of Castellina, head west to Radda. Make a stop in the charming town of Lecchi before continuing on to San Sano and Monti. From here, enjoy a stunningly breathtaking drive through Bogleione to the final destination of Siena. Spend an hour, a day or even base your holiday in this beautiful region, which hosts seemingly endless vineyards, restaurants and friendly villages to visit and explore.



The Best of Umbria

Begin this circle tour from Perugia, Umbria. Take the SS75 southeast through Bastia Umbra and Spello to the town Foligno. Here you can enjoy the Renaissance architecture around the town, which is surrounded by olive groves and vineyards. Take the SS3 through Trevi and onto Spoleto, where you can visit the Duomo, see ancient relics in the Museo Archeologico or walk across the 14th Century viaduct, Ponte delle Torri.

From Spoleto, drive west through Acquasparta and onto Todi which is home to great architecture, fine regional foods and a laid back pace. Further west on the SS448 you'll come across Orvieto, the city built on the edge of a cliff top. From Orvieto, follow the SR71 via Piegara, enjoying the Umbrian scenery along the way, to complete your circle back to Perugia.



Southern Italy



Home to wonderful national parks, spectacular coastline and beaches, incredible historic sites and friendly locals, Southern Italy is the place to go. Its close ties to agriculture generate some of Europe's most famed food and wines, with year-round festivals offering plentiful opportunities to enjoy the flavours of this region.

Attractions

Puglia

Bari – See the Suabian castle, the Basilica of San Nicola and visit the old town (Bari Vecchia)

Lecce – Explore rich Baroque architectural monuments and the Church of the Holy Cross

Basilicata

Metera – See the stone Sassi, carved into the cliff face

Campania

Naples – See the Angioino Castle, the Napoli Cathedral, the Royal Palace and the Catacombs of San Gennaro

Go back in time - Take a look at the ancient cities, Pompeii and Herculaneum, frozen in time when they were covered by volcanic ash over 2,000 years ago

Tour Capri – One of the finest islands of Italy, with vineyards, olive groves, beaches and magnificent resorts

Drive the Amalfi Coast – Glide along this magnificent stretch of coastline on one of Italy's most famous roads

Calabria

Get close to nature – Visit any one of Calabria's three national parks: Pollino, Sila and the Aspromonte. Explore 800km of spectacular coastline, incredible cliffs and unspoilt beaches

Explore the cities – Don't miss Reggio Calabria, Cosenza and Crotona

Molise

Go skiing or hiking – Head to the Monte del Matese for brilliant snow sports in winter and climbing in warmer months

Historic sites – Visit Sepino and the town of Pietrabbondante which dates back to 1,000BC.

Events

February

Festival of Saint Agatha in Catania – Follow this 500 year old celebration of the city's patron saint

May

I Tri de Cruci– An annual folk festival celebrated with fireworks and street performances in Tropea

Infiorata di Noto – Amazing floral displays line the Via Nicolaci of the charming Baroque town of Noto

Three Gulfs Cup– Head to the Bay of Naples to see beautiful boats race from Naples to Capri

Marriage of the Trees – Witness the ancient ritual of fertility with re-enactment the marriage of the king and queen of the forest in Accettura

June

Festival of St. Andrew– A spectacular religious celebration and festival for St Andrew in Amalfi

August

Byzantine New Year, Amalfi – Costume parades and medieval tournaments commemorate this annual party

September

Feast of San Gennaro– Residents of Naples celebrate St. Gennaro as their patron saint's statue is paraded through town

Pizza Festival – Enjoy this Italian speciality in Naples at this festival, including pizza-making workshops and demonstrations, guest chefs and, of course, plenty to eat

Regions

Puglia, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria and Molise

Self Drive Tours: Southern Italy



The Amalfi Coast

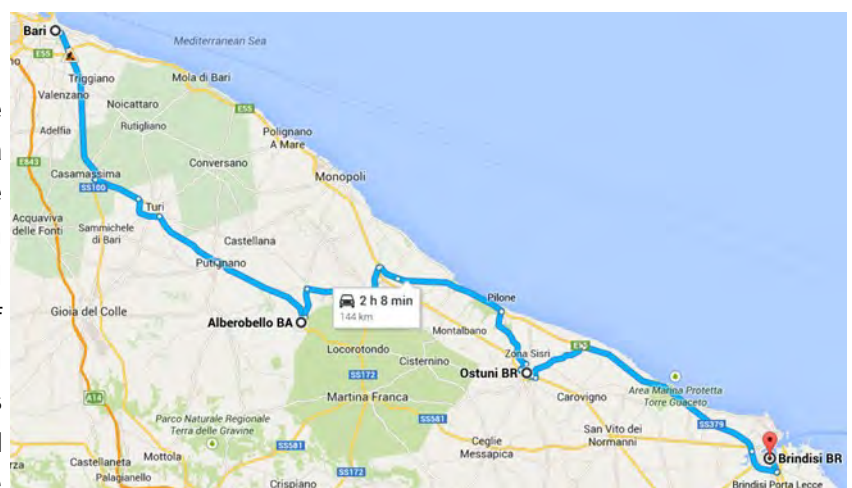
The Amalfi Coast stretches from Vietri sul Mare to Positano along the southern side of the Sorrentine Peninsula in the Campania region of Italy. This is one of the most famous drives in Europe, due to its rugged terrain and the colourful towns that dot the coastline. The Amalfi Coast is also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The road is winding and narrow, so be confident and take your time around the bends. In most cases, once you arrive at a town it's a good idea to park your car and explore on foot.

To drive the entire route, begin the Amalfi Coast tour starting from Vietri sul Mare and follow the SS163 west along the coast, along through the town of Cetara, and the seaside resort of Maiori. Then head inland to Ravello where you can visit the Villa Cimbrone to catch its well renowned views. Continue on to Amalfi, where you can explore the towns quaint squares, buzzing piazzas and the Vagliendola region. Marvel at white houses that cling precariously to the rock face. Back in the car, drive to Conca and through to Praiano and onto Positano. Explore the town and take a boat trip out to Il Galli.

From Positano, drive inland through Coli di Fontanelle and Sant Agnello and onto Sorrento. This gorgeous town is perched on cliffs looking directly out over the Bay of Naples, and holds plenty of cafés, cathedrals and museums to keep you busy. Wander the streets of the old town, and enjoy this sublime region of Italy.

Bari to Brindisi

Start this self drive tour in Bari. Visit the Bari Vecchia, Bari's Old City, boasting a beautiful medieval quarter and the cathedral of Saint Nicolaus. Drive south on the SS100 through Cellamare and Casamassima and onto the town of Alberobello. Here you can see the World Heritage listed Trulli, amazing buildings constructed in the 1600s from dry-walled limestone blocks. Further along, you'll come across the gleaming white town of Ostuni, perched on a hill in the olive groves of the Trullo Valley. After Ostuni, head north toward the coast, then travel south east along the SS379, to the city of Brindisi where you can enjoy the white, sandy beaches and jagged cliffs.





Sicily & Sardinia

Sicily is the largest island on the Mediterranean Sea and the place where Italy, Africa and Greece come together. Here you will see ancient Italian and Greek ruins, amazing beach resorts, beautiful baroque architecture, magnificent cuisine, a smouldering Mt Etna, brilliant blue coastline and buzzing cities. You can also visit Sardinia, an island with unparalleled natural beauty, magnificent national parks and beaches with crystal clear waters. The hinterland is covered with citrus groves, and pastures of grazing cattle and sheep. The people of Sardinia have a laidback lifestyle and happily embrace the island's wonderful mix of cultures.

Attractions

Sicily

Palermo – Explore the hidden treasures, see the Cathedral of Monreale, taste incredible fresh produce, and marvel at the amazing blend of modern, sophisticated buildings next to crumbling architecture

Catania – See the Greek/Roman theatre, the Odeon, St Agatha's Abbey, the Piazza del Duomo, Church of St Benedict and the Ursino Castle

Walk through the Valley of the Temples – Visit Agrigento, ancient city founded by the Greeks

Tour the islands – Jump in a boat and visit the Aolian Islands, including Lipari, Vulcano and Panarea

Noto – Visit the UNESCO World Heritage listed sandstone buildings and see the incredible baroque architecture

Learn ancient history – See where the ancient Greeks settled in Syracuse

Messina – Visit the Museo Regionale, which contains works dating back to Byzantine and Norman ages

Sardinia

Cagliari – Visit the open air archaeological sites, museums and churches

Enjoy the sun and sand – Kick back and soak up the sun on the stunning beaches of the Costa Verde

Unique local cuisine – Taste the difference between Sardinian and Italian food by sampling local bread, pasta, cakes, and delicious semi freddo ice-cream in Cagliari

Explore the undersea world – Dive or snorkel in the crystal clear waters near Alghero

Events

January

Feast of St Sebastian – Join this festival in Acireale that starts at dawn

February

The Festival of Sant'Agata – One of the largest religious processions in the world, hosted in Catania and often attracting crowds up to 1 million people

Festa del Fiore del Mandorlo – This fest includes a procession and dancing to celebrate the first almond blossoms in Agrigento

March

St Joseph's Day, across Sicily – Festivals and celebrations honour St Joseph

July

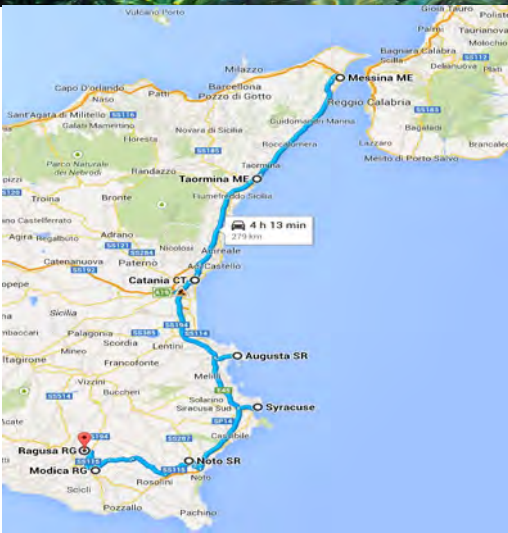
L'Ardia di San Costantino – Monumental horse race held on the grounds of the Santuario di San Costantino in Sedilo, Sardinia

August

Holy week – Celebrations are held in villages and towns across Sicily, often with re-enactments of the passion of Christ and processions followed by joyful gatherings and fireworks

Parade of the Giants – Hosted in Messina, this parade carries floats of the city's mythical founders

Self Drive Tours: Sicily & Sardinia



Eastern Tour of Sicily

There are many parts of Sicily to travel, as it is quite large, but this guide will bring you along the island's east coast. Begin in Messina, where you can see the Church of the Annunziata dei Catalani and the Fontana del Nettuno. Head south toward Taormi, home to popular beaches on the Ionian Sea, as well as an ancient Greek theatre, lively bars and great restaurants.

Drive on past the island nature reserve of Isola Bella. You'll be able to view Mt Etna to your right as you head south to Catania. After a stop in Catania, travel through Augusta to Syracuse, a beautiful city with ancient monuments dating back to 734BC, placed alongside excellent hotels and fascinating scenery.

Continue on to Noto, famous for its fine Baroque style buildings and magnificent churches. Next stop is Modica, home to ancient medieval buildings that cling to the edges of the steep gorge on both sides. The last stop is at Ragusa, built on a wide limestone hill and home to more gorgeous Baroque architecture.

Sardinia's Southern Coast

The entire island of Sardinia is surrounded by brilliant beaches and crystal clear waters. To see the southeast corner, drive from Cagliari along the SP17 through Terra Mala, Geremeas and onto Solanas, then follow the road onto Simius. Continue following the road on through Cala Pira and onto Costa Rei.



Alternatively, head southwest from Cagliari through Sarroch and Pula, then up to the islands of Sant'Antioco and San Pietro. From San Pietro, head back to mainland Sardinia and visit the city of Iglesias.

Stay Healthy & Stay Safe



Stay Healthy

Italian hospitals are public and offer free standard treatments for EU residents, and emergency assistance only for non-EU residents. Italy and South Africa do not have a reciprocal health care agreements so be sure to take out travel insurance before you go. Pharmacies and chemists carry most prescriptions, however it can be expensive, so it's best to have your prescriptions filled before you go. Carry these medicines along with a letter from your GP explaining your medical conditions.

Tap water is generally safe to drink, but avoid water where there is a sign stating "Acqua Non Potabile" it means that the water is unsafe to drink.

Stay Safe

Most visits to Italy are free of trouble, however, in major tourist areas and some big cities such as Rome and Naples, pickpockets and petty thieves operate. It is always advisable to remain alert and practice the same safety precautions you employ at home.

Keep your valuables out of view in your parked car to avoid potential theft. Don't show off expensive jewellery and cash in public. Keep your money and credit cards in a safe place. Respect the local customs and laws.

- 113 Police
- 115 Fire Department
- 118 Medical Emergencies
- 112 European Emergency Number

Where To Get Help

South Africa Embassy
Via Tanaro, 14 Rome
Telephone: +39 06 85 25 41
Fax: +39 06 85 25 41
www.lnx.sudafrica.it/en/



Money Matters

Currency

The Euro is the local currency of Italy.

EURO (€) = 100 cents.

Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5.

Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Currency Exchange

The best places to change cash in Italy are banks or post offices, where they offer the best rates of exchange. You can also exchange cash at the airport or a Bureau de Change, however the exchange rates may be higher.

Banking Hours

Banks are open in Italy Monday to Friday 8.35am to 4.00pm and closes for an hour over lunch. In major cities and tourist areas, some banks are open over the lunch period. Banks do not open on Saturday or Sunday.

ATMs

ATMs are called Bancomat and are available in cities and small towns across Italy. Look for the ATMs that show the Cirrus or Bankmate symbol as these will accept foreign debit cards.

Credit Cards

Major credit cards are widely accepted across Italy — particularly Amex, Visa and Mastercard — and can be used for most purchases.

Tipping

Tipping at restaurants and bars is not expected, however if you believe the service was exceptional, a 10% tip will always be appreciated.

Porters at major hotels will expect a tip, which is usually no more than €5.

Taxi drivers generally do not receive tips.

Useful Information

Mileage Chart Between Major Italian Cities

	Bari	Bologna	Florence	Genoa	Milan	Naples	Palermo	Rome	Turin	Trieste	Venice
Bari		681	784	966	899	322	734	482	1019	955	806
Bologna	681		106	285	218	640	1415	408	338	308	159
Florence	784	106		268	324	534	1345	302	442	414	265
Genoa	996	285	268		156	758	1569	526	174	536	387
Milan	899	218	324	156		858	1633	626	139	420	284
Naples	322	640	534	758	858		811	232	932	948	799
Palermo	734	1415	1345	1569	1633	811		1043	1743	1689	1540
Rome	482	408	302	526	626	232	1043		700	716	567
Turin	1019	338	442	174	139	932	1743	702		551	415
Trieste	995	308	414	336	420	948	1689	715	551		165
Venice	806	269	265	387	284	899	1540	567	415	165	

Time Zone

Italy is in the Central European Time Zone, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1). Between late March and late October, Italy observes daylight savings, when the time is shifted forward one hour (GMT+2).

Airports

Rome

Fiumicino (FCO) 32kms southwest of the city, approx 30-55 minutes journey. www.adr.it

Ciampino (CIA) 15km from the city, approx 30-40 minutes journey. www.adr.it

Milan

Malpensa (MXP) 45km northwest of the city, approx 30 minutes journey. www.sea-aerportimilano.it

Linate (LIN) 13km southeast of the city, approx 30 minutes journey. www.sea-aerportimilano.it

Florence

Peretola (FLR) 12km northwest of the city, approx 25 minutes journey. www.aeroporto.firenze.it

Venice

Marco Polo Airport 21km north of the city, approx 50 minutes journey. www.veniceairport.it

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We look forward to hearing from you!

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