

# Travel & Driving Guide

## Italy



auto  europe<sup>®</sup>

fly  international<sup>™</sup>  
part of auto  europe. LLC

# Index

<b><u>Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>Tips and Road Signs in Italy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Driving Laws and Insurance for Italy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Road Signs, Tolls, driving Requirements for Italy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Car Rental FAQ's</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Italy Regions at a Glance</b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>Touring Guides</u></b>	
<b>Rome Guide</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Northwest Italy Guide</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Northeast Italy Guide</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Central Italy</b>	<b>14-16</b>
<b>Southern Italy</b>	<b>17-18</b>
<b>Sicily and Sardinia</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>Getting Into Italy</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Climate, Language and Public Holidays</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Key Facts</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Money and Mileage Chart</b>	<b>26</b>



# Touring Italy By Car

Italy is a dream holiday destination and an iconic country of Europe. The boot shape of Italy dips its toe into the Mediterranean Sea at the southern tip, has snow capped Alps at its northern end, and rolling hills, pristine beaches and bustling cities in between. Discover the ancient ruins, fine museums, magnificent artworks and incredible architecture around Italy, along with century old traditions, intriguing festivals and wonderful culture. Indulge in the fantastic cuisine in Italy in beautiful locations. 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 will allow you to enjoy all the famous sites, and give you the freedom to uncover some undiscovered treasures as well. This guide is aimed at the traveler that enjoys the independence and comfort of their own vehicle. We have included information you'll need for a self drive holiday in Italy, from renting a car, rules of the road to some great ideas for touring the different regions of this unique and wonderfully varied country.

## Tips in Driving In Italy

Driving in Italy can be a wonderful experience, and in some cases it's a pure necessity. Here are a few tips to help you acclimatize to driving in Italy, and help make your self-drive holiday the best that it can be.

Familiarize yourself with the road signs and parking rules.

Drive on the right hand side of the road. The driver sits on the left hand side of the car.

Italian drivers are competent and fast. Do not be daunted by aggressive driving, instead be confident and you'll fit right in.

When you collect your car rental, familiarize yourself with the car's controls.

Types of roads in Italy:

- **Autostrada:** Motorways and freeways
- **Major Roads:** Dual carriageways and highways with more than one lane in each direction and generally fast moving
- **Minor Roads:** Narrow, winding roads with one lane in each direction and slower moving traffic
- **White Roads:** Narrow, dirt or white gravel roads through the countryside. Known locally as 'Strade Bianche'.

The center lane of a three lane highway is for passing or overtaking. Slower traffic drives on the right lane.

Be cautious on narrow winding roads on routes such as Cinque Terre and the Amalfi Coast. Most of the small towns on these routes have little or no parking, some do not permit cars at all so park your car outside of the towns and see the sites on foot.

## Important Italian Road Signs



Stop



No Motor Vehicles



Parking



One Way



No Passing



No Parking



Do Not Enter

# Driving Laws in Italy

- Drivers must carry proof of insurance and domestic drivers license and registration papers at all times. An International Drivers License (IDL) is mandatory and functions as a translation of your US drivers license and may be obtained at American Automobile Club or the National Auto Club
- Speed limits:  
130km/hr (80miles/hr) on highways (autostrada), 110km/hr (68miles/hr) on highways when wet.  
110 km/hr (68miles/hr) on dual carriageways, 90km/hr (56miles/hr) when wet.  
90km/hr (56miles/hr) on open roads, 80km/hr (50miles/hr) when wet.  
50 km/hr (31 miles/hr) inside cities regardless of weather conditions.
- Hefty fines can be issued for speeding offenses, and police have the authority to collect fines on the spot. Speed cameras are set up in many places, so if you're caught speeding the fine will be posted to the car rental company, who will then pay the fine with your credit card used at the time of collection.
- Child Safety: Children under the age of four must be seated in an approved safety child seat restraint, and children aged 4 to 12 must be secured in a suitable child restraint while seated in the front seat.
- When driving on the autostrada, freeways or highways, you must drive with your headlights on.
- It is illegal to talk on a mobile phone while driving in Italy.
- Drunk driving is illegal. The maximum blood alcohol level is 0.05, and DUI drivers can face hefty fines or imprisonment so be smart, do not drink and drive.
- An emergency triangle must be carried in the vehicle at all times.



## Insurance

Car Rental companies in Italy will normally include:

- **Third Party insurance:** compulsory insurance and will be included in your car rental 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 prepaid car rental rates. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car.
- **Theft:** this limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** this limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in prepaid car rental 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.



## License Requirements

An International Driving license is recommended for American drivers license holders. An International Drivers License (IDL) functions as a translation of your US drivers license in ten different languages and may be obtained at American Automobile Club or the National Auto Club International. Make sure that you take your American license with you as well. Car rental companies will require that drivers have held a full license for at least one year.

## Min & Max Age Requirements

**Min Driving Age:** 21 – some suppliers allow drivers from 18 years but apply 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:** There is no maximum driving age in Italy with most car rental suppliers; however the max driving age for some car rental companies is 75 years. In these cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their physician stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with Auto Europe for further details.

## Road tolls & e-tags

The Autostrada system is privately owned, and drivers pay a toll to use it. You collect a ticket when you enter the Autostrada, and pay the toll once you exit. When you arrive at an entrance of the Autostrada, head to the gate marked 'Biglietto' (ticket), rather than the Telepass or Viacard gate. When you exit you can pay the toll at the Biglietto cards with either cash or credit card.

## Parking in Italy

Although parking may be hard to find in larger cities, everywhere else in Italy parking is relatively easy to find. In larger tourist areas there are numerous pay parking lots outside of the historic areas. Street parking is designated with signs, and coloured lines denote whether it's paid or free parking. Blue lines indicate pay parking, where a ticket machine will be close by to purchase a parking ticket to display on the car dashboard.

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 on the cars windshield, which shows 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.

Leaning Tower of Pisa

# Italy Car Rental FAQ's

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

This depends on where you're traveling, how many people are traveling and the style of driving you intend to do. Cars range from small (economy, compact) to larger size cars (intermediate, full size), to convertibles and luxury vehicles. For short trips with fewer passengers opt for the smaller cars; for longer trips with the family then a larger car, van or SUV would suit. There are plenty of car rental options to choose from; it all depends on your personal needs.

**How do I figure what car is right for me?**

You can use the ACRISS system to show you which car will suit your needs.

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		E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Ute		
		X = Special		



**Can I rent an automatic car in Italy?**

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

**Will I be able to collect my rental car direct from the airport once I arrive, or will I have to take a shuttle bus to the depot?**

In most cases, car rental desks and depots are located at domestic and international airports, or located just outside the terminal grounds with shuttle services available. You should be informed when you make your car rental booking exactly where your car rental depot will be located.

**Are there additional fees to collect my rental car from Italian airports?**

Auto Europe's car rental rates usually include the airport or 'premium location' fees for car rental collections in Italy. Check your prepaid voucher to make sure that this included.

**What about collecting my rental car from downtown Italy?**

Premium location fees will include airport, downtown and railway depots, and should be included with inclusive prepaid car rental. Check with Auto Europe to ensure this is included.

**Do I need a credit card to collect my car rental?**

Yes. Car rental suppliers will usually freeze the excess of the vehicle (from €200) which will be refunded when the rental car is returned at the end of the rental. This amount may be refunded via a check which is sent to the renter's residential address.

**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 before you travel to find out any additional costs.



# Rome

Rome is the capital city of Italy, situated on the river Tibur between the Apennines and the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Eternal City of Rome was originally founded as a village in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, and over the last two and a half thousand years, with the might of the ancient Roman Empire, earned the esteemed title of the Capitol of the World. Although today it's no longer *caput mundi*, it is a living masterpiece, rich in architectural and cultural beauty with a unique love of life and appreciation of art and history. Rome is a bustling, thriving, chaotic city, where the modern day life blends in with ancient buildings and magnificent *dolce vita* – the sweet life.

## What's On...

January:

- *Epiphany Fair in Piazza Navona – A fair of toys, sweets and other presents around the Bernini fountain.*

April:

- *Rome's Good Friday Procession – a torchlit procession moving from the Colosseum re-enacting the 14 Stations of the Cross.*

May:

- *May Day Musical – Rome celebrates spring's arrival with fantastic music festival.*

June:

- *Estate Romana Festival - Running from late June to September this festival offers music, film theater and children's fun.*

July:

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

August:

- *15<sup>th</sup> – Feast of the Assumption: the streets of Rome come alive with the Gran Ballo di Ferragosto, with dancing in the town squares.*

September – October:

- *Roma Europa Festival – Modern art, theater, music and dance including Italian and European artists.*
- *Rome Jazz Festival – music festival dedicated to jazz that's been running since 1876.*
- *Celebration of St Francis – Rome celebrates its patron saint, St Francis, on this feast day.*
- *International Film Festival – a celebration of the Italian Film Industry.*

## Best Things to See & Do

*Visit 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. View the brilliant work of Michelangelo, Raphael and Botticelli on the chapel ceilings and frescoed panels.

*The Colosseum* - See where gladiators fought in mortal combat in Ancient Rome in the epitome of Roman architecture that was built in AD72.

*The Roman Forum* - Visit what was once the religious, commercial and political center of Ancient Rome.

*The Pantheon* – This is one of Rome's best preserved ancient monuments, built as a temple in 27BC, and is a brilliant example of Ancient Roman architectural ingenuity.

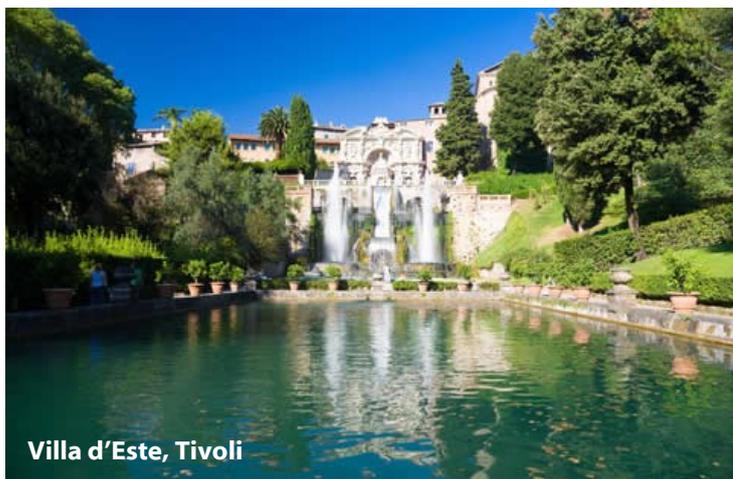
*Trevi Fountain* – toss a coin into Rome's largest and most famous fountain to ensure that you return to Rome.

*Escape the city's buzz and head to Tivoli: Villa d'Este* – enjoy a stroll through the landscaped gardens and mossy fountains in this famous Italian-styled garden.

*Experience magnificent food* – try some local made gelato, pasta and pizza, and sip delicious coffee at an outdoor café.

The Colosseum, Rome

# Self Drive Tours around Rome



Villa d'Este, Tivoli

## Rome to Tivoli

The drive from Rome to Tivoli is a relatively short drive, and well worth the effort. Head 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.

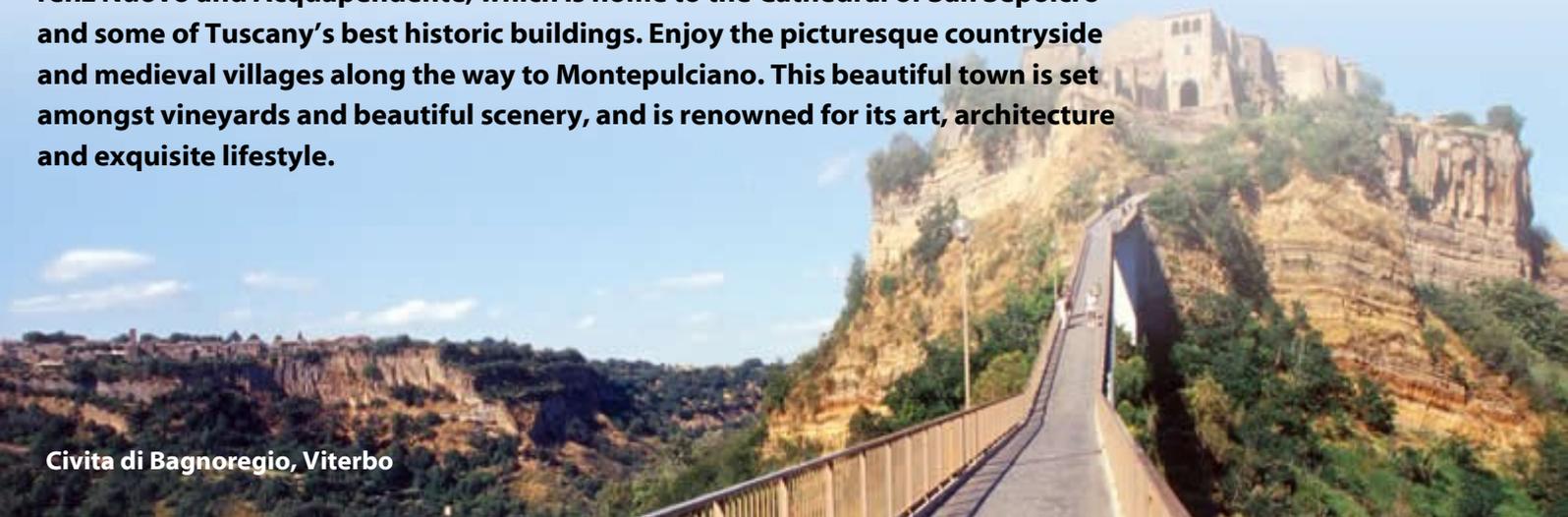
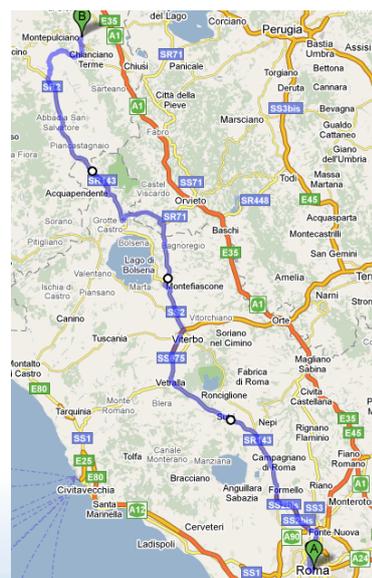
Tivoli is home to the Villa d'Este in the Piazza Trento. This is one of Italy's finest palaces, however one of the main reasons people come here is for the gardens. Villa d'Este is constructed with hundreds of water fountains and water features. While in Tivoli, make some time to see the Hadrian's Villa,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



## Rome to Montepulciano, Tuscany

One of the nicest areas outside of Rome is Tuscany, and the ancient city of Montepulciano is located right in its heart. You can drive there in little over two hours if you take the autostrada, but if you'd like to see the magnificent countryside of the Tuscan regions, 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 center 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, where you'll be met by the incredible Saint Margherita's Cathedral. Head north around the lake to Bolsena, then on through San Lorenzo Nuovo and Acquapendente, which is home to the Cathedral of San Sepolcro and some of Tuscany's best historic buildings. Enjoy the picturesque countryside and medieval villages along the way to Montepulciano. This beautiful town is set amongst vineyards and beautiful scenery, and is renowned for its art, architecture and exquisite lifestyle.



Civita di Bagnoregio, Viterbo

# Northwest Italy

Northwest Italy is a unique and spectacular region of Italy, 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 cobblestoned 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.

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

Cities: Aosta, Bergamo, Brescia, Genoa, La Spezia, Milan, San Remo and Turin.

Other: Cinque Terre and Lake Como.

## Best Things to See & Do

**Lombardy:**

*Explore the capital, Milan* – see the financial and economic powerhouse city of Italy.

*Visit Como* – see the lake where the rich and famous holiday, enjoy all the water sports and leisure of this beautiful region.

*Explore Bergamo* – this is one of the most picturesque cities in Italy, where modern and historic architecture stand side by side.

**Liguria:**

*Drive along La Riviera di Ponente* – follow the road along the Ligurian coast from Genoa to the border with France to Nice.

*Visit Portofino* – stay in one of Italy's most exclusive seaside resorts.

*Cinque Terre* – visit the World Heritage Listed Site and now national park, and see small coastal villages clutching the terraced cliffs with unparalleled views of the Mediterranean.

*Explore the hilly, winding streets of Genoa* – explore the *caruggi* in the old part of Genoa and get a taste of true Italian history.

**Piedmont:**

*See the Museo Egizio, Turin* – one of the world's largest Egyptian museums.

*Visit the Mole Antonelliana, Turin* – this houses Italy's National Cinema Museum that was originally built as a synagogue.

*Relax in Turin* – stroll through the many elegant squares, gardens, parks and cafés in this beautiful city.

*Ski the Italian Alps* – The Milky Way is one of the world's most well renown ski fields and home to the 2006 Winter Olympics.

*Forage for truffles* – Visit the forests near Asti for exquisite truffles.

**Valle d'Aosta:**

*Sightsee in one of Italy's wealthiest regions* – visit the Aosta Cathedral, the 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 one of the hiking trails across some of Europe's most spectacular mountains, Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn.

## What's On...

**January:**

• *San Remo Flower Festival, San Remo, Liguria.*

• *Fair of Saint Orso, Aosta, this 1,000 year old event attracts artisans, musical entertainment, food and wine.*

**February:**

• *Fair of San Faustino & Giovita, Brescia, Lombardy – the cities largest fair, with Italian and European vendors*

**March:**

• *Feast Day of St Joseph, La Spezia, Liguria – massive festival, with markets, music and local foods.*

• *Chocolate Fair, Turin, Piedmont – market fair of local and Italian chocolates*

**April:**

• *St George Bonfire, Portofino, Liguria*

**May:**

• *Zegna Regatta, Portofino, Liguria – watch the sailing regatta along the spectacular coast.*

• *Second Sunday in May, Sagra del Pesce (fish festival), Camogli, Liguria – visitors flock to witness the locals pay homage to the patron saint of fisherman, St Fortunato.*

• *Alba International Music Festival, Alba, Piedmont – musical festival held over May, June and July.*

**September:**

• *Aplo de Asti, Asti, Piedmont – famous bare back horse race.*

**December:**

• *Christmas markets, Borga Dora, Turin – best festive markets in Italy.*



Cinque Terre, Liguria

# Self Drive Tours in Northwest Italy

## Tour the Alpine Valleys

Begin this tour in Ivrea just north of Turin and head toward the famous Carema vineyards. Drive 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.



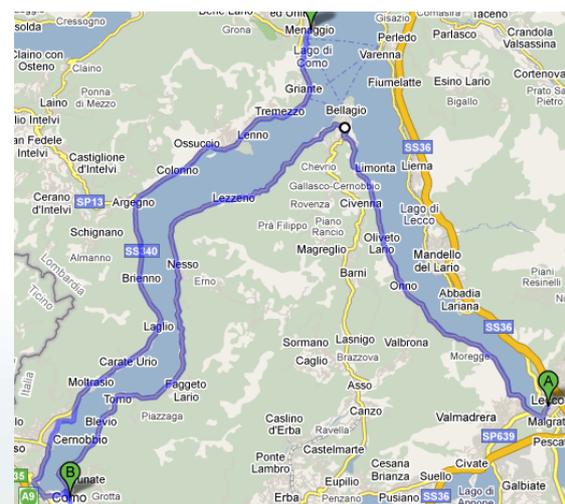
If you head west from Point St Martin, you'll come across Bard, etched into a deep narrow gorge at the head of the Aosta Valley. There's a magnificent fort and lovely cobbled streets to explore. Further along, you'll get to Verres, home to the Verres Castle that was built in the fourteenth century. Drive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



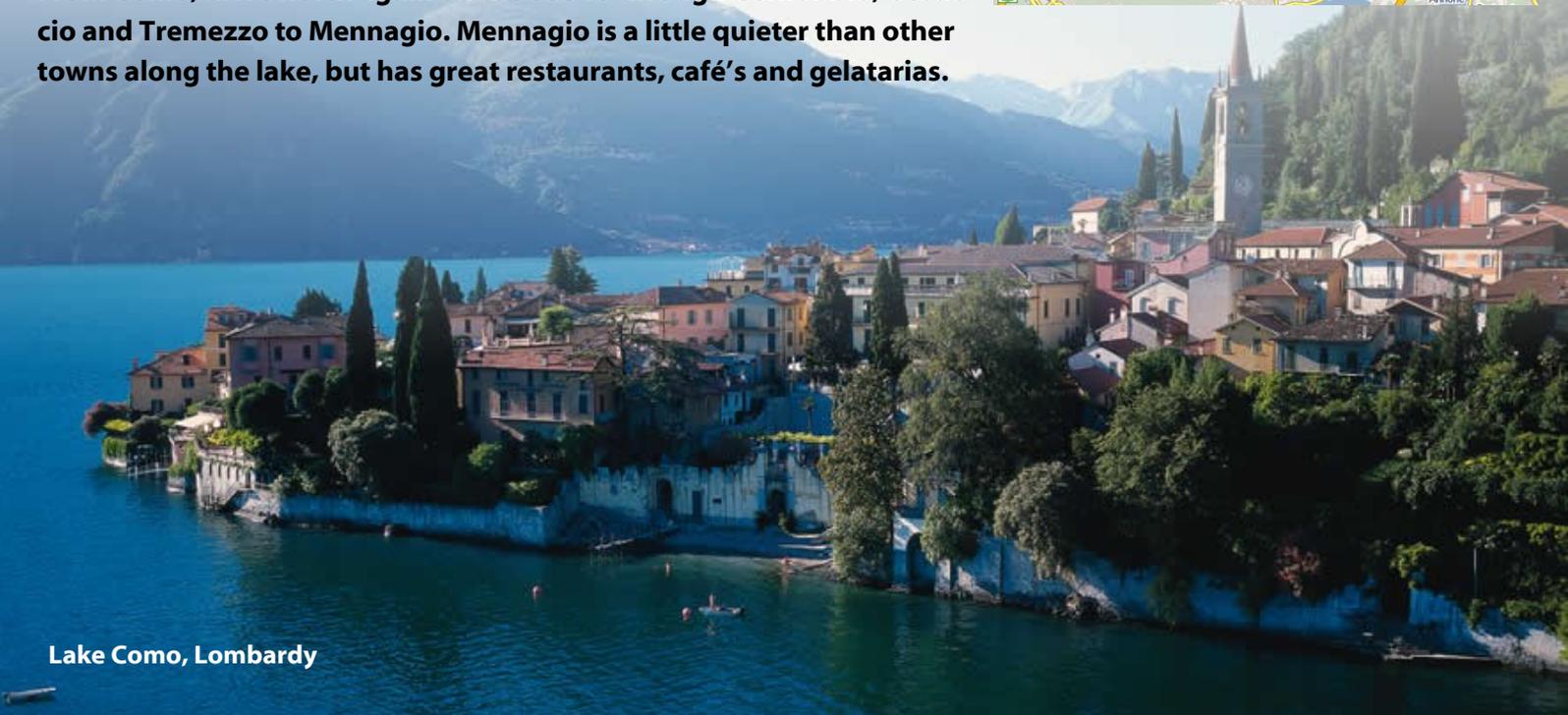
Italian Alps, Piedmont

## Tour Lake Como

This route follows just one section of Lake Como, and needs to be handled with care, since the roads at times can be narrow and somewhat windy. But do not be daunted, it's well worth the effort. Begin this tour at Lecco and follow the SS583 through Moregge, Onno and Limonta to the town of Bellagio which is located at the tip of the peninsula that juts into Lake Como. This pretty town is one of the main tourist centers on the lake and the main center for the lakes' boat services. Follow the SS583 back down the west coast of the peninsular 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, café's and gelatarias.



Lake Como, Lombardy

# Northeast Italy

The northeast region of Italy is, quite simply, spectacular. The beauty and majesty of the rugged snow-capped mountains, exceptional art, ancient frescoes and historic architecture. Unique cities such as Venice and Padova, true romantic cities like Verona, magnificent scenery and friendly locals make this a special holiday destination.

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

Cities: Bologna, Ravenna, Padova, Rimini, Trento, Trieste, Verona, Venice and Vicenza.

## Best Things to See & Do

**The Veneto:**

**Venice** – no trip to Italy would be complete without seeing Venice. Walk along the canals, take a gondola ride, marvel at the Basilica di San Marco and St Marks square and savour the good life. **Explore the homes of Romeo and Juliet** – visit Verona and see *Casa Giulietta* (Juliette's house), see the huge amphitheater that's the Arena, and the *Giardino do Palazzo Giusti*, one of the finest gardens in Italy.

**Trentino-Alto Adige:**

**Ski in the Dolomites** – enjoy over 350 miles of ski runs and hundreds of cross country tracks. **Explore the lakes region** – visit the beautiful Lake Garda and Lake of Carezza.

**Visit Bolzano** – the capital of Alto Adige and influenced by German culture due to its close proximity to the German border.

**Wine tasting** – drive to Meran, surrounded by high mountains and is one of the best red wine producing areas of Italy.

**Friuli-Venezia Giulia:**

**See the Gian Grotto** near Trieste.

**Visit the Miramare Castle, Trieste** – built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is positioned above the Adriatic Sea.

**Emilia-Romania:**

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

**Visit Europe's oldest university** – Bologna is home to Italy, and Europe's oldest uni, and also hosts a fantastic medieval center.

**Enjoy ancient artworks** – drive to Ferrara and Ravenna so see magnificent Byzantine mosaics and a wonderful Renaissance center.

## What's On...

**January:**

- *Vintage Car Race, Dolomites* – Racing over 500km of icy roads, the Winter Marathon drives to & from the Madonna do
- *Campiglio resort*, and features historical cars built before 1968.

**February:**

- *Carnevarle, Venice* – annual Mardi Gras festival with ornate masks, exquisite fancy dress balls and festivals.
- *Verona in Love, Verona* – five day festival over Valentines Day, inspired by the story of Romeo and Juliette.
- *Carnevale di Cento, Cento* – one of the major festivals in Italy.

**April:**

- *Vinitaly - The Wine Festival, Verona* – one of the largest wine exhibitions in the world.

**June:**

- *San Daniele Ham Festival, Dan Daniele, Friuli* – four day festival dedicated to food, particularly prosciutto.

**December:**

- *Christmas Fairs across Northeast Italy* – fantastic festive market stalls held across the month of December in almost all regions, offering traditional crafts and food plus classic Christmas concerts and exhibitions.



# Self Drive Tours in Northeast Italy

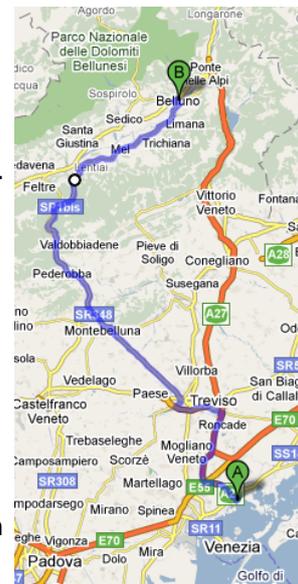


Dolomites, Trentino-Alto Adige

## 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, skiing, snowboarding, hiking or mountain biking. There's something for everyone in this great region. You can travel the fast way across the A27 that leads direct to Belluno, which should take just over an hour on the Autostrada. The alternative will take you a little over two hours without stops, but this is definitely not a drive to be rushed.

From Venice take the A27 to Casier and head west on the SR53 to Treviso, where there are plenty of ancient ruins and gardens to explore. Head onto the SR48 head northeast through Montebelluna and Pederobba, and onto the SB1 through Vas, Capen and the beautiful town of Lentiai. Enjoy the winding roads, charming villages and magnificent mountain vistas along the way through Mei, Trishiana, Viscome and onto Belluno.



## Venice to Lake Garda

Head west from the city of Verona on the E70 towards Padua, which is reputed to be the oldest city in northern Italy. See the *Scrovegni Chapel*, the *Palazzo della Ragione* and the *Basilica do Sant'Antonio*.

Further west, you'll come into Vicenza which has been listed as a World Heritage Site. In Vicenza you'll be able to see the *Basilica Palladiana*, the *Teatro Olimpico* and the *Palladian Villas of the Veneto*.

Drive west through the town of San Bonifacio to the beautiful city of Verona. Here you can visit the *Arena*, the Roman amphitheater, the *Castelvecchio*, and see what inspired Shakespeare to write *Romeo and Juliet*. Outside of Verona you can explore the magnificent wine districts of *Valpolicella* and *Soave*. Back onto the A4, drive another half hour to the unrivalled *Lake Garda*, one of the most beautiful lakes in all of Europe.

This beautiful region offers splendid natural scenery and is a playground for people of all ages. Visit the village of *Sirmione* with historical buildings and castle, see the beautiful *Gardone Riviera*, go hiking or climbing at *Monte Baldo* and *Riva del Garda*.



Lake Garda, Trentino-Alto Adige

# Central Italy

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

Regions: Lazio, Abruzzo, Marche, Tuscany and Umbria

## Best Things to See & Do

### Lazio

**Rome** – visit the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Vatican, including the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museums. Rome - When in Rome, do as the Romans do...enjoy coffee in an outdoor café, dine on pizza and pasta, and toss a coin in the Trevi Fountain for good luck.

**Visit the market place** – go to Campo de Fiori, Rome, a beautiful rectangular market place with fresh produce.

**Drive out to Lake Albano** - visit this beautiful region, see some of the historic towns and grand villas and see the summer home of the Pope in Castel Galdolfo.

### Tuscany

**Florence** – see some of the world's best and most famous artworks, including Botticelli, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Titian at the Uffizi gallery; visit the Boboli Gardens, and the *Ponte Vecchio* that crosses the Arno River.

**Pisa** – see one of the true icons of Italy, the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

**Visit Siena** – explore the Gothic architecture and incredible art in this World Heritage listed site.

**Learn to cook** – take in a cooking class and learn how to create authentic Italian (and Tuscan) dishes.

**Visit Lucca** – a beautiful old city that's home to great restaurants, lovely churches and a rich history and is hidden behind monumental renaissance walls.

**Live like a king in Il Chianti** – drive through rolling hills, vineyards and farmhouses and sample the world famous food & wine.

### Umbria

**Perugia** – Explore the cobbled streets, stroll along a Roman aqueduct, walk under the Etruscan arch, visit the *Duomo* (cathedral).

**Explore Assisi** – see this magnificent hill town that was home to St Francis.

**Orvieto** – see the gorgeous cathedral in the city that's built precariously on the edge of a cliff.

**Explore the countryside** – stop in some beautiful, ancient towns and villages, such as Gubbio, Spoleto and Spello.

### Abruzzo

This beautiful region of Italy lays less than 50 miles to the east of Rome.

**Visit the beautiful National Parks** – mountain climbing, hiking and sightseeing in Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga.

**Hit the slopes** – ski or snowboard any one of Abruzzo's 15 ski resorts in the Apennines.

**Enjoy Italy's sandy coastline** – Fossacesia, and Marinscuro are popular beaches with great seaside resorts.

### Le Marche

**Visit Urbino** – this university town is full of Renaissance art, history and steep, steep streets.

**Explore the ancient villages of Macerata and Ascoli Piceno** – full of culture, art and rich in history, these towns dot the landscape of Le Marche.

**Soak up the sun** – visit the beachside resorts along the east coast near Monte Conero and Pesaro.

Trevi Fountain, Rome

# What's On in Central Italy...

## January:

- *Carnivale, Foiano della Chiana, Arezzo – one of the oldest Carnival celebrations in Italy, with masked balls, costumes and parades.*

## February:

- *Spello, Perugia, Umbria – Olive and bruschetta festivals celebrating the olive harvest.*

## March:

- *La Festa degli Statuti, Fossato de Vico, Perugia, Umbria – festival re-enacting the signing of the towns constitution, medieval costumes and plenty of food and music.*

## May:

- *Corsa dei Ceri, Gubbio, Perugia, Umbria – authentic and unique medieval festival.*
- *Iris Garden of Florence Opening, Florence – for 19 days only in May, these magnificent gardens are open to the public.*

## June:

- *Festival of the Two Worlds, Spoleto, Umbria – music, dance and cultural festival.*
- *Giostra Della Quintana, Foligno, Umbria – historic parade and Renaissance jousting, run from June to September.*
- *International Opera Festival, June – August, Arena di Verona*

## July:

- *Malborghetto Festival, Rome – festival featuring theatrical performances in the Malborghetto Archaeological Park.*
- *Mercantia Festival, Certaldo Alto, Florence – international gathering of street performers and artist set in the beautiful medieval town.*
- *Umbria Jazz Festival, Perugia and Cortona, Umbria – weeklong music festival.*

## August:

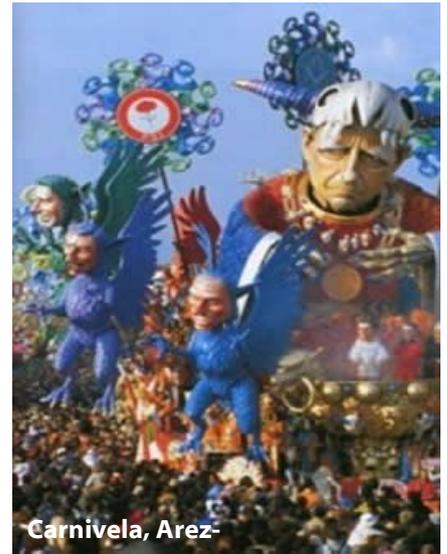
- *The Baroque Festival, Viterbo – from August to October the Baroque Festival focuses on classical music, both Italian and International.*

## September:

- *La Macchina de Santa Rosa, Viterbo – Celebration of the city's patron saint, St Rosa.*
- *Sagrantino Wine Festival, Montefactio, Tuscany – festival devoted to celebrate the local regions wines.*
- *Umbra Music Festival, Perugia, Umbria – Historic music festival.*
- *Pane Nostrum, Sendigallia, Marche – the City of the White Art hosts a three day festival dedicated to bread.*

## October:

- *Feast Day for St Francesco – nationwide celebrations in honour of Italy's patron saint.*
- *EuroChocolate Festival, Perugia, Umbria – 9 day festival of indulgence and decadence, in honour of this ancient Etruscan towns most famous export.*



Carnivela, Arez-



Gubbio Festival, Umbria



Umbria Jazz Festival, Perugia

# Self Drive Tours in Central Italy

## Florence to Siena via the Chianti Valley

Take on the beautiful Tuscan countryside on this lovely drive that would take just under two hours without stopping, but the sites along this route are definitely worth it. Follow the SS222 south from Florence and enjoy the scenery through Strada in Chianti, Grete and Greve in Chianti. Once you get to the town of Castlina in Chinati, head west to Radda in Chianti and then south through Lecchi, San Sano and Monti. The small village of San Giovanni is a pretty rest stop, then on through Boglione to Siena. Spend an hour, a day or even base your holiday in this beautiful region; there are so many vineyards, restaurants and friendly villages for you to visit and explore.

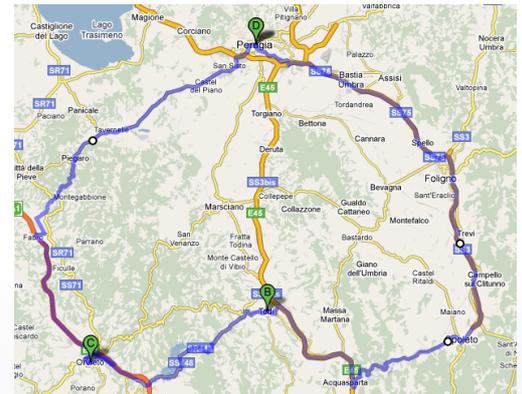


Umbria

## 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 when you stroll 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 craggy clifftop. From Orvieto, follow the SR71 via Piegara, enjoying the Umbrian scenery along the way, to complete your circle back to Perugia.



Vineyard in Um-

# Southern Italy

Regions: Puglia, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria and Molise.

Cities: Bari, Brindisi, Catanzaro, Foggia, Naples, Potenza, Salerno, Taranto and Reggio

Experience the 'real Italy' in the heel and toe of the Italian boot. This region is home to wonderful national parks, spectacular coastline and beaches, incredible historic sites, and friendly locals. Its close ties to agriculture generate some of Europe's most famed food and wines, with year-round festivals commemorating great produce. You will also enjoy the warmth, hospitality and culture of the people of Southern Italy.

## What's On...

February:

- *Sant'Agata in Catania, Catania* – follow this 500 year old celebration of the cities patron saint.
- *Carnivale* – all across southern Italy, costumed parades, masks and street parties dominate February with a fabulous party mood.

May:

- *I Tri de Cruci, Tropea* – this annual folk festival celebrates with fireworks and street performances.
- *Infiorata, Noto* – see amazing floral displays that line the streets of this Baroque town.
- *Three Gulfs Cup, Bay of Naples* – see beautiful boats race from Naples to Capri.

June:

- *Marriage of the Trees, Accettura* – witness the ancient ritual of fertility with re-enactment the marriage of the king and queen of the forest.
- *St Andrews Celebration, Amalfi* – this is the most spectacular celebration for St Andrew, with food, particularly fish, and song.

August

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

September:

- *Feast of San Gennaro, Naples* – residents celebrate St Gennaro as their patron saint's statue is paraded through town.
- *Pizza Festival, Naples* – the best chance to taste the genuine Pizza Napolitana over 11 days of celebrations.

## Best Things to See & Do

Puglia

*Bari* – Bari is the capital of Puglia. See the Suabian castle and the Basilica of San Nicola, visit the old town (*Bari Vecchia*) or just soak up the chic atmosphere in its restaurants and cafes.  
*Bask in the magnificent coastline* – this coast consists of white sand beaches, dramatic white limestone cliffs and grottos and sparkling blue and emerald waters.  
*Lecce* – explore the rich Baroque architectural monuments and the Church of the Holy Cross.

Basilicata

*Matera* – see the stone *Sassi* (houses) that have been dug into the cliff face.  
*Holiday with the rich and famous* – visit the seaside resort of Maratea.  
*Explore the forests and peaks* – explore the Parco Nazionale del Pollino, and the soaring peaks of the Lucanian Apennines.

Campania

*Naples* – See the Angioino Castle, the Napoli cathedral, the Royal Palace and the Catacombs of San Gennaro.  
*Go back in time in Pompeii and Herculaneum* – take a look at the ancient Roman cities that were covered by volcanic ash over 2,000 years ago and frozen in time.  
*Take a tour to Capri* – see one of the best natural beauties in all of Italy, with vineyards, olive groves, fantastic beaches and magnificent resorts.  
*Drive the Amalfi Coast* – this is one of Italy's most famous roads on part of Italy's most spectacular coastline.  
*Visit Mt Vesuvius* and the craters of the Campi Flegrei.  
*See Salerno* – the second largest city in the Campania region, and home to the Monastery of St Benedetto and the Castle of Salerno.

Calabria

*Get close to nature* – visit any one of Calabria's three national parks: Pollino, Sila and the Aspromonte. Explore the 800km of spectacular coastline, with incredible cliffs and unspoilt beaches.  
*Explore the cities* – see 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.  
*See historic sites* – visit Sepino, and the town of Pietrabbondante that dates back to 1,000BC.  
*Soak up the sun* – visit the resort town of Termoli for a great beach break.



Cetara, Amalfi Coast

# Self Drive Tours in 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, particularly for its scenic beauty, the beautiful towns that dot the coast and its rugged terrain. The Amalfi Coast is also listed as a 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 outside and explore on foot.

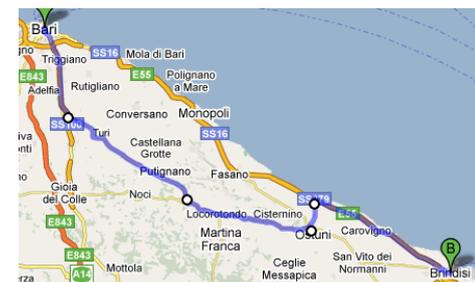
To drive the entire route, begin the Amalfi Coast tour from Vietri sul Mare and follow the SS163 west along the coast, along through the town of Cetara, and the seaside resort of Maiori. Head inland to Ravello where you can see Villa Cimbrone which hosts the best views in all of Italy. On to Amalfi, where you should leave the car and explore the small squares, buzzing Piazza's and the Vagliendola region. Marvel at the white houses that cling precariously to the rock faces. Back in the car, drive along to Conca, the town also built along the cliff face, through to Praiano and onto Positano. Explore the town, and take a boat trip out to explore Il Galli.

From Positano, drive inland through Coli di Fontanelle and Sant Agnello and onto Sorrento. This beautiful town is perched on cliffs that look directly over the Bay of Naples, with plenty of café's and restaurants, cathedrals and museums to keep you busy. Stroll through the streets of the old town, and see where the rich and famous spend their summer holidays.



## Bari to Brindisi

Spend time exploring Bari *the Bari Vecchia*. It's 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*, which are amazing buildings made from dry-walled limestone blocks built in the 1600's. Further along you'll come across the gleaming white town of Ostuni perched on a hill in the olive groves of the Trullo Valley. From here, head north toward the coast and travel south east along the SS379, enjoying the white sandy beaches and rugged cliffs to the city of Brindisi.



# Sicily & Sardinia

Sicily is the largest island on the Mediterranean Sea, and is 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. Sardinia is an island with unparalleled natural beauty, magnificent national parks, great beaches and crystal clear waters. Its hinterland is covered with citrus groves, and pastures of grazing cattle and sheep. The people from Sardinia have a somewhat laidback lifestyle, the result of a wonderful mix of different cultures and heritage.

## Best Things to See & Do

### Sicily

**Palermo** – explore the hidden treasures, see the Cathedral of Monreale with its magnificent mosaics and impressive structure, taste incredible fresh produce, marvel at the amazing blend of modern, sophisticated buildings next to crumbling architecture.

**Catania** – see the Greek/Roman theater, the Odeon, St Francis of Assisi nigh the Immaculate, St Agatha's Abbey, the Piazza del Duomo, the Church of St Benedict, and the Ursino Castle.

**Walk through the Valley of the Temples** – visit Agrigento and see the site of the village first founded by the ancient Greeks.

**Take a boat to tour the islands** – jump in a boat and visit the Aeolian Islands, including Lipari, Vulcano and Panarea.

**Noto** – visit the World Heritage listed sandstone buildings and see the beautiful baroque architecture.

**Learn ancient history in Syracuse** – see where the ancient Greeks settled.

**Messina** – visit the Museo Regionale with 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 on the Costa Verde.

**Experience the unique local cuisine** – taste the difference between Sardinian and Italian food by sampling its bread, fresh pasta, cakes, plus delicious *semi freddo* ice-cream in Cagliari.

**Explore the undersea world** – dive or snorkel in the crystal clear waters near Alghero.

## What's On...

### January:

- *Piana degli Albanesi, Palermo* - Byzantine Epiphany celebrations.
- *St Sebastian, Acireale* – festival celebrating San Sebastiano.

### February:

- *St Agatha' Feast Day, Catania* – huge festival including a 2 day procession and is one of the largest religious processions in the world.
- *Almond Blossom Festival, Agrigento* – held on the first Sunday of the month, with procession, dancing and international folk dancing.
- *Carnival Week, across Sicily and Sardinia*

### March:

- *St Joseph's Day, across Sicily* – festivals and celebrations honouring St Joseph.

### May:

- *Beach Festival, Mondello* – beach parties held in second week on the month.

### July:

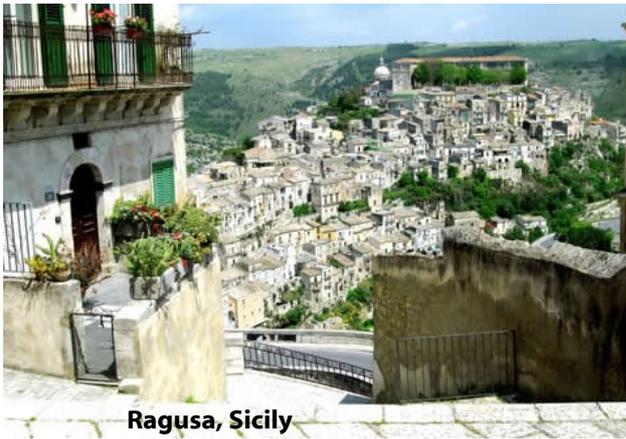
- *Renaissance Music Festival, Erice* – international music celebration.
- *L'Ardoa di San Costantino, Sedilo, Sardinia* – monumental horse race held on the grounds of the Santuario di San Constantino.

### August:

- *Holy week and Ferragosta* – celebrations held all over Sicily.
- *Parade of the Giants, Messina* – parades with floats of the city's mythical founders.

Chiesa de Noto, Sicily

# Self Drive Tours in Sicily & Sardinia



## Eastern Tour of Sicily

Since the island of Sicily is so large and there are so many sights to see, our driving guide will give you a glimpse of some of the best parts of the island. Begin the tour at Messina, where you can see the Cathedral, the Church of the Annunziata dei Catalani and the Fontana del Nettuno. Head south toward Taormina, home to popular beaches on the Ionian Sea, as well as an ancient Greek theater, lively bars and great restaurants.

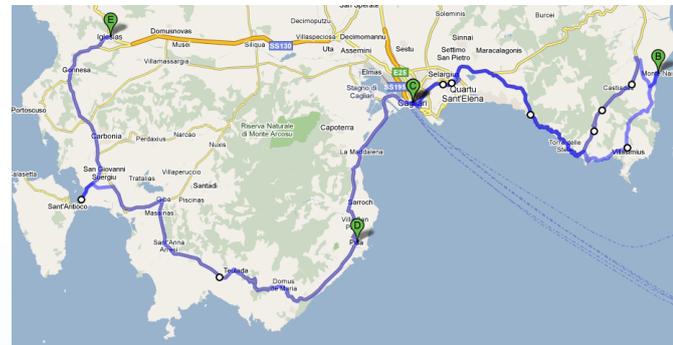
Drive on past the nature reserve that is the gorgeous island of Isolella Bella. You'll be able to view Mt Etna to your right as you head south to Catania. After a stop in Catania, go through Augusta to Siracusa, a beautiful city with ancient monuments dating back to 734BC, alongside excellent hotels and fascinating scenery. Driving on to Noto, which is 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 that is built on a wide limestone hill and is home to gorgeous Baroque architecture.



## Sardinia's Stunning Coast

The entire island of Sardinia is surrounded by brilliant beaches and crystalline waters. To see the southeast corner, drive from Cagliari along the SP17 through Terra Mala, Geremeas and on to Solanas, then follow the road onto Villasimius. Follow the road on through Simius, Cala Pira, Cala della Maria and onto Monte Nai.

For the best of the *cost verde*, head southwest from Cagliari through Sarroch, Pula and then up to the islands of Sant'Antioco and San Pietro. Head north to Iglesias, and follow the SS126, enjoying the views of the coast and stopping off at some of the best beaches on the planet.



# Getting into Italy

## By Land

Italy is connected to mainland Europe through Austria, France, Switzerland and Slovenia. Some mountain passes are closed in the winter months, and sometimes in the spring and autumn, so the best road options are the main tunnels. The primary connections into Italy that are open year round are:

**From France:** the Mont Blanc Tunnel at Chamonix, connecting to the A5 for Turin and Milan. You can also drive into Italy from France along the French Riviera via the E80.

**From Switzerland:** the Grand St Bernard, the Gotthard and the new Swiss Lötschberg Base tunnels.

**From Austria:** the Brenner Pass which connects to the A22 to Bologna.



## Italian Airport Information

**Rome: Fiumicino (FCO)**  
19 miles southwest of the city,  
approx 30-55 minutes journey.  
[www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)  
Ph: +39 06 65951

**Florence: Peretola (FLR)**  
7 miles northwest of the city,  
approx 25 minutes journey  
[www.aeroporto.firenze.it](http://www.aeroporto.firenze.it)  
Ph: +39 055 3061 300

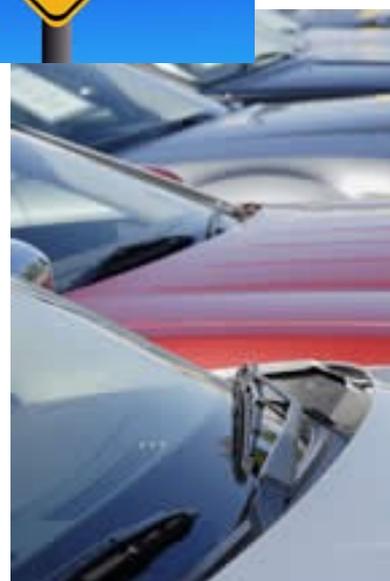
**Rome: Ciampino (CIA)**  
7.5 miles from the city,  
approx 30-40 minutes journey.  
[www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)  
Ph: +39 06 65951

**Venice: Marco Polo Airport**  
13 miles north of the city,  
approx 50 minutes journey  
[www.veniceairport.it](http://www.veniceairport.it)  
Ph: +39 041 260 9260

**Milan: Malpensa (MXP)**  
27 miles northwest of the city,  
approx 30 minutes journey.  
[www.sea-aeroportimilano.it](http://www.sea-aeroportimilano.it)  
Ph: +39 02 7486 7702

**Pisa: Galileo Galilei (PSA)**  
1 mile north of they city cen-  
ter,  
approx 10 minutes journey  
[www.pisa-airport.com](http://www.pisa-airport.com)  
Ph: +39 050 849 300

**Milan: Linate (LIN)**  
8 miles southeast of the city,  
approx 30 minutes journey.  
[www.sea-aeroportimilano.it](http://www.sea-aeroportimilano.it)  
Ph: +39 02 7485 2952



Naples Port, Campania

## By Sea

**Main Ports:**

**Ancona:**

[www.autoritaportuale.ancona.it](http://www.autoritaportuale.ancona.it)

**Brindisi:** [www.porto.br.it](http://www.porto.br.it)

**Naples:** [www.porto.napoli.it](http://www.porto.napoli.it)

**Venice:** [www.port.venice.it](http://www.port.venice.it)

# Accommodation Ideas

## Motorhomes:

All the convenience of accommodation and transport in one! Rent a fully equipped motorhome from Auto Europe. Call us for up to date models and rates.



## Hotels:

There are literally thousands of hotels and pensions in Italy, so you'll have plenty of options to choose from. Hotels are charged according to class, season, availability and locality, and are generally rated from 1 to 5 stars. For a full list of all Italian hotels and pensions, see the full list published by the Italian State Tourist Board.



## Bed & Breakfasts:

Be welcomed by families that open their homes to guests, and who will be more than happy to impart their knowledge of the local areas and customs. The rooms are normally slightly smaller than guest houses or hotels, but this could be one of the cheapest and friendliest ways to tour Italy.



## Villas:

Live like a king (or queen!). Enjoy the laidback lifestyle and live true Italian ways

## Farmhouses (Agriturismo):

Experience rural Italian life and a slow paced holiday, stay in a room in a farmhouse in the countryside and enjoy the scenery, meet the local people and sample the regional food. This is becoming an increasingly popular option for holidays longer than 7 days, since you can really get to know the 'true' Italy. And this is often a cheaper option than staying in city hotels.



## Camping & Caravanning:

There are over 1,700 official campsites in Italy, and many of the larger campsites provide tents or caravans to rent.

## Youth & Backpacker Hostels:

The Italian Youth Hostels Association runs over 100 youth hostels over Italy. In the summer months it's a good idea to book a couple of weeks in advance to avoid disappointment.

## Alpine Huts:

Perfect for mountain hikers, walkers can stop in for refreshments, meals and an overnight stay, usually with an alpine farmer. Simple dwellings that are generally only open July to September.



# Climate & Weather

The north of Italy is much cooler than the south, since this region is further from the equator as well as the higher altitude. Summers are warm in the northern mountains and winters are very cold, producing the best snow and ski conditions in the early months of the year.

The southern tip of Italy dips into the Mediterranean Sea, and has hot, dry summers, with winters being moderately temperate. In between, summers can be very hot in some regions due to the hot winds from Africa (sirocco) and winters are cold, sometimes producing snow and fairly wet.

# Language & Useful Phrases

Italian is the official language spoken in Italy, while dialects are spoken in different regions. English, French and German are spoken in the main cities and tourist centers.

Hello: *Buongiorno* or *Ciao*  
My name is: *Mi Chiamo ...*  
Goodbye: *Arrivederci* or *Ciao*  
Thank you: *Grazie*

Exit: *Uscita*  
Entrance: *Entrata*  
Ring Road: *Tangenziale*  
Petrol: *Benzina*  
Diesel: *Diesel*  
Motor Oil: *Lubrificante*  
One-Way: *Senso Unico*  
No Parking: *Veitati parcheggiare*  
Four Lane Highway: *Autostrada*  
Detour: *Deviazione*  
Forbidden: *Proibito*  
Police: *Polizia*

To the left: *a sinistra*  
To the right: *a destra*  
To the north: *a nord*  
To the south: *a sud*  
To the east: *a est*  
To the west: *a ovest*

One: *uno*  
Two: *due*  
Three: *tre*  
Four: *quattro*  
Five: *cinque*  
Six: *sei*  
Seven: *sette*  
Eight: *otto*  
Nine: *nove*  
Ten: *dieci*

# Public Holidays

2011	
Jan 01	New Years Day
06 Jan	Epiphany
25 Apr	Easter Monday
25 Apr	Liberation Day
01 May	Labour Day
02 Jun	Anniversary of the Republic
15 Aug	Assumption
01 Nov	All Saints Day
08 Dec	Immaculate Conception
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	St Stephens Day

Ligurian Coast

## Stay Healthy

Italian hospitals are public and offer free standard treatments for EU residents; however for non EU residence emergency assistance is given. North America does not have a reciprocal health care agreement with Italy. Your comprehensive travel insurance should cover any medical costs. Pharmacies and chemists carry most prescriptions, however it can be expensive, so it's best to have your scripts filled before you go, and 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 'Acqua Non Potabile' it means that the water is unsafe to drink. No vaccinations are required to travel into Italy.

## Stay Safe

Most visits to Italy are free of troubles, however, as with travel to any country there is the potential for dangerous situations. In major tourist areas and some big cities such as Rome and Naples, pickpockets and bag snatchers operate, so a money belt containing your valuables worn under your clothing is a good idea.

Keep your valuables out of view in your parked car to avoid potential smash-and-grab thefts. Do not make yourself a target by showing off expensive jewellery and cash in public. Keep your money and credit cards in a safe place. Respect the local customs and laws. Try not to leave anything in your car that will tempt thieves. The same as travelling in any foreign country, your common sense is the most valuable possession you can have.

Rooftops of Rome



### Important Phone Numbers

113 Police	112 Carabinieri's service (military police)
115 Fire Department	116 Italian Automobile Club for road side assistance
118 Medical Emergencies	176 International Enquiries
12 Phone Directory Assistance	1528 Traffic reports

### Where to Get Help

USA Embassy  
Via Vittorio Veneto,  
119, Rome  
Ph: 39 06 46741  
[www.italy.usembassy.gov](http://www.italy.usembassy.gov)

### Local Tourist Boards

Italian Government Tourist Office  
630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1565  
New York, NY 10111  
PH: 212-245-5618  
[www.italiantourism.com](http://www.italiantourism.com)

# Key Facts on Italy

**Location:** Western Europe

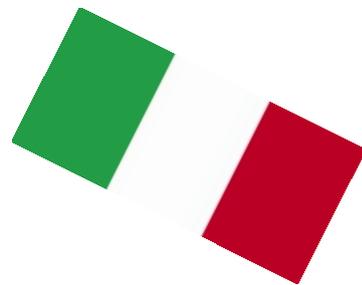
**Area:** 116,305 sq. miles

**Capital:** Rome, population 2.6 million

**Largest City:** Rome, followed by Milan

**Population:** 60.1 million

**Population Density:** 519 per sq. mile



## Geography:

Italy is located in Southern Europe, consisting of a peninsula that extends into the central Mediterranean Sea. Italy shares its land borders with France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia. The climate is mostly Mediterranean, varying between hot and dry in the south and Alpine in the far north. The terrain is mostly rugged, hilly and mountainous with coastal lowlands. The Italian Alps, particularly the Apennine Mountains, form the backbone of the northern boundary. Italy is home to active volcanos, including Etna, Vesuvius and Stromboli. The highest point in Italy is Mont Blanc which is just over 4,700 meters above sea level. There are several islands that also form part of Italy, especially Sicily and Sardinia.

## Time Zone:

Italy is in the Central European Time Zone, which is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1). In summer Italy observes daylight savings, when the time is shifted forward one hour (GMT+2).

## Communications:

### Telephones:

The country code when phoning Italy is (39). Public phones are available across Italy, however you will need to use a phone card as coins are not accepted. Phone cards can be purchased from newsstands or tobacco shops.

When in Italy and calling a local or interstate number you need to enter the correct area code, then the phone number, eg to call Rome dial (06) + phone number, or to call Venice dial (041) + phone number.

When calling a mobile phone, drop the zero (0) of the area code then dial the number. Within Italy, roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies.

### Internet:

As with most countries, there are more and more internet cafes across Italy. Most urban areas have internet cafes, and there are a growing number of Wi-Fi hotspots. Most international airports will offer internet access.

### Post:

Stamps are sold in post offices and tobacconists. Post offices are open Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm, with some post offices in larger cities open on Saturday till 12.00pm.

## Measurements

Italy uses the metric system of measurement:

1 millimetre (mm) = 0.03937 inches	1 milligram (mg) = 0.0154 grain
1 centimetre (cm) = 0.3937 inches	1 gram (gm) = 0.0353 oz
1 metre (m) = 1.0936 yd	1 kilogram (kg) = 2.2046lb
1 kilometre (km) = 0.6214 mile	1 tonne (t) = 0.9842 ton

Temperature is measured in degrees Celsius.

## Electricity

220 volts AC, 50 Hz. Electrical appliance plugs have two round prongs, not flat so a European plug adaptor will be necessary. These can be purchased at electrical appliance stores in Italy.

## Shopping hours

Normal trading hours in the larger cities and tourist areas in Italy are 9.00am – 1.00pm, then 3.00/4.00pm – 7.30/8.00pm.

## Smoking

Since July 2005, Italy has banned smoking in all enclosed spaces, including bars and restaurants. Smoking is permitted in special sealed off areas fitted with smoke extractors, in open spaces and in private homes.

# Italian Money Matters

## Currency

The Euro is the local currency of Italy.

EURO (€)

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 is either at banks or post offices, where they offer the best rates of exchange. You can also exchange cash at the airport or Bureau de Change however the exchange rates may be more expensive.

## 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

ATM's 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, in hotels and restaurants. Use the following numbers to report lost or stolen credit cards:

Amex: 800 914 912

Travelex: 800 872 050

Mastercard: 800 870 866

Visa: 800 874 155

## Traveler's Cheques

Traveler's cheques are still used in Italy, however they're being outdated by credit and debit cards. It's a good idea to have cheques made in large denominations to reduce commission charges. You may need a form of photo identification to cash traveler's cheques.

## Tax

Value added tax of around 20% is added to most goods and services in Italy, known locally as IVA (Imposta de Valore Aggiunto)

## Tipping

Tipping is not expected, however when good service warrants it, leaving a 10% tip would be appreciated. The same applies in bars. Porters at major hotels will expect a tip. It isn't common to tip taxi drivers.

## Mileage Chart:

	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	



Tuscany Road



Tropea, Calabria

This touring information has been created to be used as a guide only. Auto Europe is not liable for any misinformation, typographical errors, etc. related to the information contained in this guide. Auto Europe would like to thank Italian Tourist Board for their assistance in producing this guide. For further information, please visit [www.italiantourism.com](http://www.italiantourism.com).

