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DRIVING DIRECTIONS

ROME AIRPORTs (FIUMICINO) TO SANSEPOLCRO

Most hire and leased cars from Rome Airport come from the same area in the car park (4th floor, Building C) and the exit is pretty straight forward. Beware the Car Park has ver tight turns for the down ramp!

The car company will probably give you a basic map of all of Italy, which will be useful as an overall outline of how the roads go, but not much use for small detail. It is preferable to have your own map of Central Italy or Tuscany/Umbria for local use and for finding your way around when you are here.

Depending on whether you have a leased or hire car, you will have either a full tank and you are expected to return with a full tank or pay the difference. Or, you are provided with a virtually empty tank but just enough to get you to the nearest petrol station. So pay attention to the directions for same, which is just outside the airport.

You will be given a car park ticket to get you out of the gate of the car park. Turn right on the exit from the car park and then follow the Green signs for ROMA through a number of lefts on semi roundabouts. Be careful as it is not always obvious who has the right of way. Generally, the rule is give way to the right. Once on the road to Rome it is straight ahead for about 15K. The first major turn-offs will be clearly marked and at this stage you will be looking for the Green (Autostrada) sign for FIRENZE (Florence). The Naples turn off will appear in the right lane. But the Florence turn off comes immediately after the Naples turn off. Be warned that the first time you see one of the signs for Florence it will be overhead and indicating the middle lane. Shortly there after, however, it will be the right lane merging with incoming traffic, and this is one turn off you do not want to miss. Although you go to the right you will end up going left as the road turns under the one you were on.

At this point you will be joining the GRA (Grand Raccordo Annulare), which is the giant ring road that encircles Rome. Get ready to merge left immediately as the left lane takes you onto the ring road proper and has you skirting the north west of the Eternal City. The GRA is a six lane race track alternating with a traffic jam as a result of the Eternal Roadworks. To be fair it is gradually falling into shape and should be proper freeway soon. Keep the green Firenze signs constantly in your sights, and keep driving for about 25 minutes. The GRA is always busy and the traffic fairly hums along. It can be a bit testing as there is traffic constantly leaving and joining the route.

After about 25-30K the GREEN signs for FIRENZE (blue ones are only for smaller, state roads) start appearing. Exit 8-9-10 is the exit you are looking for and it comes up immediately after you cross the river which is obvious by a sharp left into a traffic jam shortly followed a sharp right out of it. A number of destinations take the same exit which is on the right hand side into a slip road parallel to the GRA and then stay in the left lane until you join a big fig leaf that eventually joins the main road North. Now you can relax and follow the green signs as you are out of Rome and away from the traffic. This road eventually joins the Autostrada some 25K further on outside Rome.

For first time Autostrada users, remember, you will have to pay in cash, i.e. Euros on exiting. There is a card facility but do not rely on your card working first time in the Italian system. It is not all that expensive and when you hand in your ticket at the exit gate the cost will be displayed on a screen. Usually Euro 3+ to Orte. Wait for your change.

When approaching the Autostrada look for the gates displaying the picture of a man leaning out of the booth handing out a ticket and always check for the green light above the gates. It may also be labelled TICKET. There will also be a number of gates for holders of special credit cards (Blu) and a digital drive through system, like E-tag called TELEPASS with bright yellow lanes. Ignore those.

Once on the Autostrada north there are two options for the Valtiberina.

(1) The first is to leave the Autostrada at Orte, (about 3+ Euros) to join the E45 for PERUGIA and points north. Orte is only the third exit after joining the Autostrada, and it is a more direct route. It is also think more interesting. Once off the Autostrada the E45 takes a little while to establish itself as a major road but soon takes you on a scenic tour of Northern Lazio and into Umbria. If you feel like a pit stop more interesting than a roadhouse, then you could do far worse than lunch in NARNI or TODI. 20 Km after the Orte exit the E45 is supposed to divide with the left arm running north past Todi and on to Perugia. The road ahead leads to Terni, then on to Spoleto and up the back valley to Perugia. As of Dec 2008, it can be difficult to find the turn-off north as the Italian Roads department has not worked out an efficient alternative while they install a new flyover. The detour is poorly marked and about 4 km out of the way. If you miss it you can proceed via Spoleto. It takes a little longer but you get to see a different part of the country.. Either way keep heading for Perugia and when you are in its environs start looking for the signs to CESENA. It is most important to remember this name as CESENA is north of the Valtiberina. For this reason it is always sign posted and to locals it means 'points North'. Do NOT follow any signs to Firenze. The E45 goes around Perugia and heads north up the Tiber Valley. Another 50 K on this road gets you to CITTA DI CASTELLO. Do not take the first exit to Citta Di Castello Sud. Continue north. There is a short tunnel (the only one this entire road after Perugia) and then you can take the exit to CITTA DI CASTELLO for some properties. This is the southern end of the Valtiberina. Or depending on your destination you can continue north for a further 10 Km to SANSEPOLCRO Exit.

(2) You can take the Autostrada directly through to AREZZO from Rome. You take the Arezzo exit and then there is a 10-12 K drive into town along a pretty straight access road. Just as you are getting close to Arezzo - you will be able to see it on the hill right in front of you - the road more or less peters out at some traffic lights. You will need to take the left centre road turn to SANSEPOLCRO at these lights. This road peels round and turns to the right over the road you were just on. You should now be on a sort of ring road that runs around the bottom of Arezzo. Go straight ahead through a roundabout, straight on but stay in the left lane, another roundabout and then a set of traffic lights until you come to an omni directional sign that looks like an octopus. This road has a rather tricky little end with it splitting off to the right - signs to Sansepolcro and Siena. It is suddenly two way so be careful. And then shortly an awkward T junction at which you take the left to Sansepolcro. You are now on either the S78 or S73 depending on which signs you believe. However as long as you are heading towards Sansepolcro or more or less north east you are going in the right direction. Drive straight up and over the hill and you arrive onto a stretch of motorway through a beautiful valley. The motorway ends tjust before a small town called Le Ville. At the end of the town keep to the left. There is a turn off to CITERNA shortly afterwards on the right - about 2 K. Another Kilometre on and the turn off to ANGHIARI is to the left and clearly marked. Straight ahead another 6 or 7 K and you arrive at SANSEPOLCRO.

DIRECTIONS FOR DRIVING FROM ROME'S CIAMPINO AIRPORT TO SANSEPOLCRO - VALTIBERINA

Turn right on the exit from the airport to join the main road running into Rome. In about 1 Km there is an exit off to the right to join the Rome Ring Road or GRA. Look for signs to FIRENZE. Once you have joined the GRA, which is a very busy road you just go with the flow for about 22 Km. You will be looking for exits 10-9-8-7 which all go off to the right on the same slip road. Be prepared for a sudden sharp right to FIRENZE. and the road swoops down to join the approach to the A1 Autostrada to the north. From here on follow the directions above.