

Car Hire at Pisa Airport

All the major car hire companies are represented at Pisa Airport. You can walk the 400yds from the terminal building to the car hire building or alternatively take the shuttle bus – the route is well marked in red tarmac (turn right as you exit the terminal building).

Car hire bookings are made through Auto Europe (<http://www.autoeurope.co.uk/go/car-hire-italy/>).

The points to watch are:

1. Only book with a hire company that has a facility on-airport. Do not be tempted by the apparently lower prices offered by off-airport companies who use a private shuttle bus to enable you to access their facilities.
2. Go for a “drive away full, return full tariff” and avoid Goldcar (they currently score poorly on user surveys).
3. If you feel the need to have additional insurance to eliminate the extortionate 1600 euro theft/accident excess required by the car hire company (and you should!) we recommend taking out an annual car hire excess insurance policy with Questor (<https://www.questor-insurance.co.uk/car-hire-insurance.aspx>). We wouldn't recommend Auto Europe's insurance offering (or indeed the insurance offered by the care hire firm at the airport for that matter).
4. Firefly (owned by Hertz) often offers the best deal – except at very busy times you may well find that they will include a second driver for free.
5. Snow chains are now usually provided as standard at no extra cost.
6. Don't hire a SatNav – use the one reserved for guest use at our house in Lusignana.
7. Small cars are the best as many of the roads in Italy are narrow. Facing down a large tractor powering along a country road can be disconcerting when one is driving a large saloon car!
8. Auto Europe uses dynamic pricing so the cost of a hire varies from day to day and week to week depending on demand. The best time to book is between 10 and 6 weeks before departure. On several occasions. We have booked a car many months in advance only to find that a few weeks before departure the price has collapsed. In those circumstances we have cancelled the original booking and then re-booked at the lower price. (Auto Europe allows you to cancel your booking up to 48hrs before pick-up without penalty). The safest thing to do is to book early and then to monitor the car hire price every couple of weeks – using this method the hire charge we paid for a week at the end of January 2017 was reduced from £118 to £28 (both rentals with Firefly)!
9. Should you take our advice and use the “drive away full, return full tariff” make sure you have some low denomination notes with you when you arrive at the petrol station to fill up at the end of your holiday. The petrol station at the airport is often unmanned and the credit card machine is unreliable (to say the least).

Remember that in Italy you are required to drive with dipped headlights at all times. Also, make sure you know how to operate the windows before you leave the parking lot or you'll have a problem at the first toll booth!