

Directions to Gaiole: From Pisa Airport

Arriving at Pisa Airport, you need to catch the Shuttle Bus to the Car Hire 'Terminal'. It's actually only a ten minute walk, but a bit of a hassle with luggage etc. I've provided two sets of directions from the terminal; the first is the 'pretty way' (only to be tried in daylight!) and takes about 1hr 45mins; the second is a little further, but with more dual carriageway/motorway still no longer than 2hrs. The first 40mins or so is the same for both.

The Pretty Way

1. Turning right as you leave the car hire car parking, you come to a roundabout after just 100m or so. Turn RIGHT onto the slip road, clearly marked (in blue) to Firenze.
2. This is the Fi-Pi-Li (Firenze-Pisa-Livorno) 'Strada Grande Comunicazione', an SGC, one grade down from a motorway, and is not a toll road.
3. Follow the dual carriageway for about 40mins towards Firenze (there is just one 'merge' as you join the traffic from Livorno), passing all the exits to Empoli. Shortly after the 'Montelupo' services, and at the top of your first proper hill, you reach (and take) the GINESTRA exit.
4. At the end of the slip road, go straight on at the first roundabout, passing the Agip petrol station on your LHS and at the next roundabout, exit RIGHT to TAVERNELLE. (Ignore exit to Greve in Chianti).
5. Follow road to BACCIANO; about 5-6km. Bacciano now has a bypass taking you away from the village, you will reach a new roundabout where you go straight on, (second exit) signed San Casciano.
6. From here follow road to main road junction, another 7-8km. At T-junction turn LEFT into main road towards San Casciano. The road climbs steeply into the village of San Pancrazio.
7. As you come into the village, turn RIGHT into a small road signed ROMITA (it's virtually a crossroads, with another small road to your left). This follows the hill ridge with your first proper views of Chianti.

8. After 7-8km you reach another main road. Turn RIGHT, towards Tavernelle.
9. Follow the main road (about 2km) to a roundabout. This is the outskirts of Tavernelle. Go STRAIGHT ON towards Tavernelle, (ignoring right exit to Siena).
10. This road now skirts around the edge of Tavernelle for a kilometer or so. You will see a blue road sign for San Donato to your left (well before you reach the junction!). Then you reach another roundabout (offset to the left) where you turn LEFT. Signed San Donato and Sambuca.
11. 3-4km after leaving Tavernelle you cross over the main Firenze-Siena dual carriageway (ignoring the slip roads) carry straight on with the main road now shortly skirting around the small town of San Donato to your right. *(If you are looking for a lunch/early evening meal stop, there is a very reasonable, if slightly rustic restaurant on your left about 2km after crossing the Firenze-Siena flyover. It sits behind a row of tall fir trees, sorry can't exactly remember the name – La Viendetta?).*
12. With San Donato on your right, the road suddenly narrows, squeezing between a chapel and a house. About 50m after this turn LEFT into a minor road. It is actually signed Gaiole, but it's easy to miss. This is a very pretty little road; you drop steeply down towards PIAZZA. *Another eating opportunity, the restaurant (Osteria alla Piazza, closed Mondays) is a bit expensive, but very good.*
13. Through Piazza, follow the road down into the valley to the main road and a T-junction at the bottom. Turn LEFT, signed Greve in Chianti.
14. The main road climbs steeply, and at the top, about 2km, you turn RIGHT signed RADDA IN CHIANTI, Gaiole and Luccarelli.
15. The road twists down to Luccarelli and then follows the valley bottom for about 8-9km reaching a main road at a new roundabout on the outskirts of RADDA. Go STRAIGHT ON.
16. This takes you away from Radda and through the little village of La Villa. Another kilometer or so, and the main road swings sharp left with a turning

off, effectively STRAIGHT ON. This is clearly signed GAIOLE. Follow the road downhill for about 6-7km to the next junction.

17. At the T-junction, turn sharp LEFT into the main road; you are now just outside GAIOLE. Follow the road for 2km or so and into GAIOLE.
18. Driving into the village, pass the petrol station, then bus stop and car park, all on right. You then see the church on your LEFT. Turn left towards VERTINE immediately after the church.
19. Another 100m or so, turn RIGHT by the bollards up a steep hill. You can clearly see the Borgo immediately above you. The road swings sharp left, then turn right into the Borgo. **You've arrived!**

The Main Road Route

1. Leave airport as above.
2. Take Fi-Pi-Li dual carriageway as above.
3. Follow dual carriageway towards Firenze, as above, but carrying on past Ginestra exit. Carry on to the E35-A1 Bologna-Roma autostrada interchange. Follow all links to ROMA.
4. This is a toll road and you'll pick up a ticket at some point.
5. Continue south on A1 towards Roma, passing the Chuisa exit and the Chianti services.
6. After 20-25 mins you'll reach the VALDARNO exit. Leave here, and after toll booth turn RIGHT at first roundabout towards SIENA and CAVRIGLIA (and others).
7. Pass through Terranouva, basically straight on following SP11 towards MONTEVARCHI. You cross over the E35-A1 you left and enter Montevarchi.
8. Through Montevarchi follow the SS408 towards CAVRIGLIA. At the second roundabout, GAIOLE is signed (but still the same direction as Cavriglia, if you miss it). You dip down through a 'mini underpass' and head out of Montevarchi.

9. There is a further roundabout on the edge of town (an obvious first exit right), and then 5-6km into open country to another roundabout on the edge of Caviglia. Turn LEFT towards GAIOLE, and you're on the 'home run'!
10. This is a twisty 11-12km climb over the ridge and drop down into Gaiole village. In the village, turn RIGHT between the Post Office and church towards VERTINE.
11. With the Borgo above you, the last 2-300m are as (19) above. **You've arrived!**