



FERRANINO TOWNHOUSES / LE COPPIOLE

- Food and Wine Recommendations
- Places to Visit and Local Hikes

FOOD AND WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPERMARKETS IN THE AREA:

San Giovanni d'Asso--look for signs for the COOP as you drive through the town (this is a chain that you will find in almost every town in Tuscany). This one is very small, great for basics.

Hours: 8am-1pm and 4:00pm-8pm, Closed Wed. afternoon and Sunday. They offer a 10% discount for first time purchase—see the coupon that we leave in the apartment.

To make up for their small selection of produce in the COOP, the town has a weekly produce market year-round on Wednesday mornings until 1pm. Located in the main parking lot below the castello. There is also a wonderful butcher next to the Osteria in the middle of town and a baker located on the lower road that you can find to the left of the Consorzio Agrario. Look for the sign “Panificio Asso” and park in the old train station parking lot. If no one is in the shop, you can ring the bell and the woman will come down from her house although best not to disturb her during lunch hours 12:30-3:30pm.

For a bigger shop, we go to the COOP in Torrenieri which is a 10 min. drive south of S. Giovanni. At the asphalt road, make a right off our road, after 8-9km you will arrive at a stop sign, go through it and make the first right turn onto a residential street. At the end of the road make another right, then at the end of that road make yet another right. You will see the “InCoop” on the right. The main road that was used before is now all pedestrian which explains why there is a convoluted way to get to the supermarket. Recently they put up a “Varco” sign at the stop sign, if green, you are allowed to turn in and find the Coop up on the left.

Hours: 8:30am-1pm and 4:30pm-8pm, Mon-Fri, same for Sat. except afternoon: 4-8pm.

There is also an even larger one that is close to the Autostrada exit at Bettole/Sinalunga in a shopping center. We recommend stopping there on the way to us from the Autostrada. They are open continuously all day and also on Sundays (although with a Sunday lunch break from 1-4pm). As you are approaching Sinalunga, look for signs for “I Gelsi”. It will be a right turn at the little round-about after the large roundabout as you enter Sinalunga from the Autostrada (see this explained under “Directions”).

For specialty foods, go to Pienza to buy pecorino cheese among other things. Go to Montalcino to sample wine at the *Fiaschetteria* in the main piazza. Also inside the ancient fortress castle there is a bar “enoteca” where you can sample a variety of local wines as tastings (Brunello, Vino Rosso di Montalcino, etc.) and they provide a light lunch. You have a choice of sitting inside the ancient tower or out with an interior view of the fortifications.

THE VINEYARDS-

For wine tastings and tours, there are so many in the area to choose from. Many require reservations during the busy season (summer and autumn months). The following is a small sampling of the three main DOC in our area of Tuscany:

1. Brunello – Casanova di Neri website: www.casanovadineri.it

Giacomo Neri is one of the premier vintners, his Brunello routinely wins the top international prizes. The vineyard located on the road below Montalcino (about 10km from here).

2. Altesino- It is located on the Cassia, on the way to Buonconvento from Torrenieri. They also provide a light lunch and a tour. We highly recommend calling ahead to set up a tasting. www.altesino.it

3. The Fattoria Barbi on the other side of Montalcino has wine tasting, guided tours and a restaurant with a full menu. www.fattoriadeibarbi.it

4. Vino Nobile di Montepulciano – Avignonesi, website: www.avignonesi.it

There is a restaurant that serves lunch and dinner.

5. Chianti – Antinori, website: www.antinorichianticlassico.it

The new building is an award-winning work of architecture set into the hillside. It is in the Chianti region, close to Florence but well worth the drive on the FI_SI super-strada (nice restaurant also).

We have a car service that we work with if you would like to have a driver to take you around the vineyards. Please inquire.

LOCAL RESTAURANTS:

If you are visiting during the summer and early Fall, you generally need a reservation, although you can always try without. I have noted below which ones always require them. Keep in mind, where they serve pizza, most places only offer it at dinner. (note: the number of €'s denotes estimated price level).

1. LA LOCANDA DEL CASTELLO - Located in the area of the ancient castle in our town of San Giovanni d'Asso. Lovely terraces for eating 'al fresco' in the summer. Please tell Massimo, the owner, that we sent you. (€€€) Tel. 0577-802939 Closed Tuesday.

2. OSTERIA DELLE CRETE – In San Giovanni d'Asso along the main road. The owner, Donatella, has a creative menu. Don't miss her desserts, particularly the Mousse di Ricotta. Tell her we sent you. You generally do not need a reservation but probably a good idea in July-August-Sept. (€€) Tel. 0577-803076 Closed Monday.

3. TRATTORIA DA OSENNA – in San Quirico d'Orcia, a medieval hill town about 15 min. drive from us. Nice outdoor garden in the back underneath an enormous Wisteria vine. The food is classic Tuscan fare, all homemade (the Pici) and the meats are from their family farms. The wine selection is extensive. Ask for Luca if you want a recommendation for wine (and tell him we sent you!). Tel: 0577-897-541 (closed Wed.) It is a good idea to make a reservation for dinner, lunch is easier except for Sunday. (€€) One last thing, they can get very crowded at dinner in the summer, so you will need a fair amount of patience because everything is made to order.

4. LA BANDITA TOWNHOUSE CAFFE': open daily for lunch/dinner except for Monday lunch. Phone: 0578-749-005 // Website: www.labanditatownhouse.com
It is located on the main road in Pienza, almost at the end. Park outside the main walls and walk in through the ancient gate. (€€€)

5. LA COMPAGNIA – located in Torrenieri (about 7km south of our house on the road to Pienza) family-run place, very friendly. Sometimes completely booked on a Sunday evening because locals are there for the pizza. Good idea to call ahead to reserve. Tel: 0577-834-265 Closed Wednesdays. (€-€€)

6. DA MARIO, Buonconvento, Located just over the hill from us. There is a dirt road that you can take to get there (15 min. drive--look for the sign for "Pieve a Salti" along the asphalt road going towards Torrenieri. If you want to avoid the dust, you can take the long way around to Buonconvento by going to Torrenieri first and getting on the Cassia Road towards Siena (30 min.). The restaurant has quality food prepared and run by a family. Closed Saturdays. (€)

10. LA SIRENA—in Sinalunga. Great to know about if you are arriving late. It is 10 min. off the Autostrada exit at Valdichiana. Big menu, we go there for their fish—the Orata is the best in the area. What they lack in atmosphere, they make up for in the food, service and friendliness. Good to call ahead if Saturday night (€) +39 [338 466 0752](tel:+393384660752)

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

BIKE RENTALS: Both of these shops require a reservation well in advance during the warmer months of the year.

VELOCE-Gennaro de Concilio +39-344-349-7815. They have a supply of both street and mountain bikes and they drop off and pick up.

CICLO POSSE-Located outside of Pienza, good supply of E-bikes as well as regular. www.cicloposse.it

VESPA RENTALS: www.valdorciainvespa.it

PLACES TO VISIT AND LOCAL HIKES: Also, check our Facebook page for more current events in the area: Villa Ferrano – Ferranino Townhouses- let me know if you need anything translated.

1. SIENA – a must, if you want to really get to know this part of Tuscany—it is the capital city of the region. There is a beautiful 40 min. drive on back roads. Take the road through San Giovanni d’Asso in the direction towards Asciano. After Asciano follow signs for Siena (make a right at the main intersection in Asciano) and follow signs for the highway Perugia-Siena. On your return, be sure to follow signs for Arezzo/Perugia. Then you can exit at Rapolano Terme and follow signs to Asciano. This will keep you going in the right direction back to San Giovanni d’Asso. PLEASE BE AWARE YOU WILL RECEIVE A BIG FINE IF YOU ENTER THE OLD CITY THROUGH THE GATES EXCEPT FOR THE PORTA TUFO (where you can find a convenient parking lot up on the right after the gate but do not go any further than that!). Look for signs for “ZTL”. When in doubt, ask before entering. There are now ZTL’s in many cities. Siena is the only one that we know of that is closed 24/7, 365 days of the year. Most others turn the electronic gates on and off depending on time of day and day of the week.
2. Pienza – famous because it was transformed into a Renaissance “Ideal” town by Pope Pio II in the 15th Cen. Visit the Pope’s church with paintings that he personally commissioned, and the Palazzo Piccolomini with its classic garden in back. The tour of the Pope’s palazzo is worth taking. Also, be sure to walk out along the path along the outer wall where you will find magnificent views of the Mont’Amiata and the Val d’Orcia. When looking out from the ramparts you will see a small hilltown in the distance called Montichiello which has several charming restaurants.
3. Montepulciano – a classic medieval hilltown that can be visited on the same day as Pienza. My favorite place is San Biagio, a renaissance church at the base of the town with its cypress-lined avenue. You will see it as you approach the town from Pienza.
4. Sant’ Antimo – an ancient monastery on the other side of Montalcino, truly worth the 30-40 min. drive. Inside in the oldest section of the church you will find the columns made of alabaster. Good to combine with a visit to Montalcino for the wine (see food and wine rec’s). If you have children, they may enjoy climbing the ramparts of the ancient castle. (In 2020, it may be closed for renovation).
5. San Quirico d’Orcia – 15 min drive south of us along the Via Cassia. Beautiful, small, intact medieval town, much like Pienza but less crowded. Don’t miss the renaissance garden called Horti Leonini about which I wrote a small book. Also, see food and wine section on these info sheets for one of our favorite restaurants, Bar Osenna, where you can eat the best Pici and an amazing Bistecca Fiorentina.
6. Bagno Vignoni –worth visiting for the warm water that pours out of the rock and for its striking and ancient “water piazza” in the center. Good thing to do when you want to take a short trip and can be combined with S. Quirico d’Orcia. There are several restaurants in this little town that are worth trying. Also if you are interested in a spa, you can look into the Adler Thermae (www.adler-thermae.com). Also the Hotel Marcucci has a day spa and use of their thermal pools.

DAY SIGHTSEEING TRIPS and FOR THE KIDS:

7. Florence – not a bad drive on the Autostrada, about 1½ hr. from our house. Get off at Firenze Impruneta and follow signs for Centro. The historic center is off-limits to all cars without local permits except, I believe, on Sundays (you will need to check online). Find a garage to put the car; it’s the only way to deal with parking for long periods.
8. Arezzo (on the way to Florence) – if you happen to be around during the first Sunday of the month and you like antiques or collectibles, you must go to the Fiera Antiquariato in Arezzo. The sellers tables take over the entire historic center. The exact dates can be found on their website: www.arezzeriaantiquaria.org
9. FOR THE KIDS: There is an adventure park called “Saltalbero” in Rapolano Terme that guests have enjoyed very much with their children. The website: www.saltalbero.it
10. Horseback Riding -Fattoria Pieve a Salti (very near to us): www.horseback-riding-tuscany.com
They have one hour rides for little ones and full excursions for three hours for more experienced riders. Speak to Andra (0577-807302 or let me know if you would like me to make a reservation for you.
11. Lastly, I have to mention the Tuscan beaches are some of the most beautiful and cleanest in all of Italy. We love the town of Castiglione della Pescaia for a day trip, a 1.5- 2 hr drive west

of here. It is unique along the coast for its medieval fortress which is fun to walk around after a day on the beach and before/ after dinner. There are many good restaurants there to choose from. Good to get there early in the day to find parking. It is extremely busy on the weekends.

Other suggestions for day trips: Monteriggioni (on the way to S. Gimignano-Firenze) along the FI-SI Superstrada, Orvieto (south of us one hour, directly off of the A1 Autostrada), Assisi and Perugia are close to one another so make a great day trip to do together (take the Raccordo Siena-Bettolle-Perugia from Sinalunga). They are 1-1.5 hr west of us.

HIKING TRAILS:

1. Ferranino to San Giovanni d'Asso (via the dirt road) and back (approx. 7-8km). You need to watch out for cars along the asphalt road on the way back but generally it is a vigorous but pleasant walk. The road/trail is hilly and rough in some spots so be sure to wear shoes with good support that can handle the dirt road.

Making a left out of the gate at Ferranino, this is the comunal road, stay straight when you see the parking lot on the left. Along the way, the road passes through two houses that are on the road across from one another, further up you will see a small chapel surrounded by Cypress trees with a gate on the left. This area is worth exploring, it is the family tomb of the original owners of the Villa Ferrano. Just up ahead, look for a right turn that rises steeply on the right (not the road that goes straight). From this point on, you will barely encounter cars. It rises sharply uphill at first and then descends into a wooded area.

After a bit of straight road you will come upon a very steep stretch of road. It is worth the climb. When you come out to the top, you will have a spectacular, almost 360 deg., view of the landscape. If it is a very clear day try to look for Siena in the distance to the left (look for the towers on the horizon).

As you proceed you will see a fence, turn right to go down a rough road. No one has maintained this for a long time. Half a mile further, there is another fork in the road –again head right (not downhill to the left). You will pass two farmhouses that have been restored. Proceed down slope to a wooded area where the locals look for truffles and then up another steep hill (you will come upon a 3rd house that is up on top of a hill on the right).

Immediately on the left you will see a garden/art piece in a meadow named “**La Ragnaia**” which can be entered from the main asphalt road if you make a left when you reach it. It is worth seeing but requires at least an hour to take it all in. I recommend going there by car and parking in the designated parking lot inside the brick columned entrance gate. It has been built over several years by an American painter named Shepard Craig. He is considered a bit of an eccentric to build this elaborate work of garden art, leave it open to the public and live somewhere else. He also never seems to finish it and continually modifies what he has already done.

To return to Podere Ferranino, make a right at the asphalt road and walk through the town. After the shops, as you approach the castle, take the steep road to the right (it is a short cut and less trafficked) down the hill where it intersects with the main asphalt state road. Turn right and proceed for 1km. until you see the Ferrano sign on the right.

2. **Alternative:** if you only have 30-40 min. to get some exercise, you can just walk up to the crest of the hill mentioned above to enjoy the panoramic view and then turn around and go back.

There are other trails that you can try if you are feeling energetic and adventurous. Try to look for the red and white markers on posts, although many have faded over time.