

Arriving in Perugia

By train – More than likely this is how you will arrive. A few notes on the Italian train system to help you get to Perugia. Italy's train system, despite privatization, remains excellent and relatively cheap compared with the rest of Europe. No, it seems you don't need a fascist government to make the trains run on time. Traveling will be simpler if you understand how to read the timetables. In every train station there will be two of them - one white, one yellow. The white ones are arrivals while the yellow ones are the departures (*partenze*). The schedule is organized chronologically. The columns are organized like this: first, the **ora** (time of departure). Second, the **treno** (train type) and number. Note that a little squiggle like the Greek letter sigma means that the train is periodic (i.e. not every day). The train type is organized by color. Green is for the regional and interregional trains, the slower ones that make more stops. The faster *regionali* and the *diretti* are black. InterCity (IC) and EuroCity (EC) are red, faster, and you'll need to buy a supplement in addition to the ticket. Finally, the super-quick EuroStar (ES) is in blue; a supplement and a reservation are mandatory. Also in this column you may find a little S in a circle; this means that this train runs even in case of a strike (*sciopero*). An R means that a reservation is helpful, an R in a box means it's obligatory.

The column with **principali fermate e destinazioni** (destination and principal stops) is the most important. The largest city is the destination and the time next to it is when it arrives there. There will also be listed some of the other destinations. "*Si ferma in tutte le stazioni*" means that this train stops at every stop. Those heading north may need to transfer at Terontola; those heading south at Foligno. Don't miss these transfers if you're not on a direct train. In the second-to-last section, **servizi diretti e annotazioni**, there are random notes. "*Si effettua...*" means that the train runs on these days (*feriali* is Mo-Sa, *domenica* is only Sunday, *festivi* is only Sunday and holidays). Some of the other stations this train stops in might be listed. Finally, **binario** (track) is the platform the train leaves from. Down below it says "The trains normally leave from the assigned platform. Any modifications will be communicated." This is a possibility, not a rule; when buying your ticket, always ask the *binario*, then when you get there check to make sure your train is on the little electronic board. You will usually have to specify whether you want a one-way (*solo andata*) or a return/round-trip (*andata e ritorno*) ticket. If you're voyaging skid-row make sure to request *seconda classe* (second class).

Always remember to validate your ticket(s) before you **leave** - just stick them in the yellow machine. If you forget to validate a ticket and get on the train, write the date and the exact time as soon as you realize *in pen* on the back of the ticket, or better yet find the conductor and explain this to him or her. If you're running late and run into a long line just before your train leaves, hop on and go find the conductor and tell him or her that you have gotten on without a ticket ("*Sono salito senza biglietto*"). You'll pay €15 extra but you'll be able to catch the train. The other strategy is to go into the *edicola* (newsstand) and buy a destination-less kilometre ticket, e.g. 100 km, that will be enough to get you where you want to go. Remember, unless you want a joyride to Woop-Woop, those coming from the north may need to transfer at Terontola, those coming from the south at Foligno. Don't miss these transfers if you're not on a direct train.



Perugia's main station is below the town in the valley. Be sure to get off at "Perugia" and not the smaller suburban station "Perugia Ponte San Giovanni," which will be the first one you encounter when coming from the south (from Foligno or Rome) or "Perugia Università" (from the North). The main station is also called "Perugia Centrale" or "Perugia Fontivegge." Go down under the tracks via the tunnel and out the front door of the recently renovated station. Walk to the little bus ticket office over to your left (it's a long, narrow green building). Get a single ride ticket (*corsa semplice*) for €1 and go back to the station. Facing the hill with your back to the station, go to the closest bus stand to the station. Here you can take any bus that says Piazza Italia on it. Don't worry, it's the last stop. Once at Piazza Italia walk down the large, dipping street towards the piazza and big building in the distance (the Cathedral, or *duomo*). The Tourist Information (TI) is on the main piazza under the "porch" of the town hall (beside the small, round steps). You can also leave the station and walk around to the left - look for the red tracks and the silver station of the MiniMetrorò, Perugia's new light rail. Go all the way up to the Stazione Pincetto, then follow the other people out into Via Oberdan and then Piazza Matteotti, a piazza parallel to the main street, Corso Vannucci.

By Bus – If you take the Sulga bus (www.sulga.it, look under *orari*) from Rome, or any other bus, you'll arrive at Piazza Partigiani, the bus station. You might as well avail yourself of the timetable before you arrive. The airport cycles through periods of chaos and indifference but information is never very easy to obtain. To find the Sulga bus stop, take the escalator from the arrivals terminal toward the train station. You go under the road and then up again. As you arrive at ground level you should see to your left a series of bus parking spaces. The Sulga bus for Perugia waits here (it says SULGA on the side, go figure) and tickets can be bought on board. Note also that the RyanAir shuttle to Rome's other airport departs from this bus rank. The one-way bus fare airport-Perugia or vice versa is €20. Return fares work out cheaper but are only valid for one month. Cross the street, go a little to your left, and follow everyone else up the *scale mobili* (escalators) and stairways through the bowels of the former Papal fortress, the Rocca Paolina. You'll end up at Piazza Italia - follow the directions above to the TI.

By Car – If you come from the North, you'll more than likely get off the Rome-Florence Autostrada A1 onto the "Raccordo Perugia Bettolle," the extension to Perugia. Get off at either the "Prepo" or "Piscille" exit and follow the signs to the center. Park near Piazza dei Partigiani and take the escalators up. From the South you can also take the E45 superstrada north from Orte to Perugia.

By Plane – You may arrive Perugia's own airport, down in the valley at Sant'Egidio, but there is a small Sulga bus to take you to Piazza Italia. If you are taking a discount flight with a company like EasyJet, you'll have to make the three hour train ride from Pisa, Ancona, or Rome to Perugia. From Pisa take the airport train to Firenze (Florence) and then a train to Perugia (you may have to change at Terontola- see the train section). From Ancona, take the train towards Rome (you may have to change trains at Foligno to reach Perugia). In Roma, Ryan Air arrives at the secondary airport, Roma Ciampino. Ciampino airport is connected by shuttle bus to Ciampino railway station and Anagnina on the *metropolitana* (subway system). From there take a train to Perugia. You can also take the efficient Terravision buses (see www.terravision.it).

More likely you'll fly through Roma Fiumicino (also called Leonardo da Vinci). If you go by train, ask the train station employee to give you a ticket to Roma Tiburtina (€5) and then from Roma Tiburtina to Perugia (€10.12). If you say "Airport to Perugia" you'll pay the extortionary €9.50 from Fiumicino to Roma Termini (on the express train) and then €10.12 from Roma Termini to Perugia. Don't arrive too late: if you leave Rome after 20:00 you may not get the train to Perugia.

There are also several Fiumicino airport buses every day operated by the Sulga company. They leave from right in front of Terminal B, from the big parking lot that all the other buses leave from. Look for "Sulga" on the side of the bus. It takes from three to three-and-half hours to get to Perugia but it saves you hauling your luggage on and off the train. Get the newest schedule online at www.sulga.it, and call 800.099-661 for reservations (not obligatory). It's €24 one way.

Sea – Perugia and in fact Umbria is landlocked. Fugitives will be interested to know that the nearest port is Ancona, three hours away by train, from where ferries arrive from Croatia (Zadar, Split) and Greece (Igoumenitsa, Patras).