



Planning Your ITALIAN Adventure

Welcome to the preparation portion of the Italian Operations Manual, *Italy: Instructions for Use** — the only guide devoted solely to the practicalities of Italian travel.

* When all else fails, read the instructions!

Explore Italy joyously and fearlessly, with expert knowledge at your fingertips!



elcome to the preparation portion of the only guide devoted solely to the practicalities of Italian travel, **Italy: Instructions for Use**. In this document, you'll find advice and considerations for all your preparation questions as you begin to create your itinerary. There's info to help you make decisions about where to go and when, what to take and what to leave, whether to drive or take the train, buy or rent a cell phone, and more (yes, the water is safe to drink, it's just it tastes better in some places than others). Once you head for the airport, you likely won't need to refer to this section again.

What you'll need as you travel, though, is the operations manual itself, *Italy: Instructions for Use*, tucked away in your handiest pocket. You'll then have the answers to all the questions you'll have once you arrive in Italy—including the ones that haven't occurred to you yet. We recommend you grab a copy as you're making your plans, read a few pages a day, review it again on the plane, and then refer to it as necessary as you travel (it's small enough to stash anywhere, and so light you won't even know it's there).

Take a look at the last page of this document to see all that the 3.5 oz. *Italy: Instructions for Use* will keep at your side: for the travel assistance you need, at the moment you need it most. Now...let's start planning.

Italy: Instructions for Use

Available from Amazon.com, bn.com, and can be ordered from any bookseller near you. For bulk sales, please contact Beagle Bay, Inc. at beaglebay.com, or call Jacqueline Simonds at 775.827.8654. Also available through major distributors Ingram and Baker & Taylor.

illustratapress.com

ISBN-13: 978-1885436-306

Contents

Decisions, Decisions 3

When Should We Go? 3

Where Should We Go? 4

Where Should We Stay? 6

Modes of Travel 8

Two Approaches 8

Cost vs. Time, 9

Comfort and Convenience 9

Rail Pass, or Point-to-Point? 12

Preparing To Go 12

Luggage and Wardrobe 12

Wardrobe Tips 14

Packing for the Airlines 15

Money Matters 15

Cell Phones: Can We Talk? 17

Other Considerations 19

Electricity 19

Important Document Records 19

Health and Travel Insurance 20

Air Travel Tips 20

Ten Tips for the Traveler Abroad 22

Language: Not What, but How 24

Table of Contents:

Italy. Instructions for Use 30

Italy: Instructions for Use

All text, photos, and illustrations © 2007 Illustrata Press
Planning Your Adventure — Last Update: 23:22 15-Jan-09



WHEN SHOULD WE GO?

The answer to this question is the same as to so many in Italy: *Dipende* (It depends).

Before you try to answer it, first define the trip you have in mind. Are you looking to eschew the tourist centers and get “off the beaten track?” Is seeing the Sistine Chapel a must? Are you on a food-and-wine-tasting mission? Once you have a clearer idea of what’s most important, some of the following considerations will help you decide when might be the ideal time:

➔ **The hottest, most crowded periods are from late June through September**, when airline prices are highest, lines are longest, trains are full, and the heat sometimes makes it difficult to enjoy anything. In August, all of Europe goes on vacation and the roadways fill with Italians who abandon the cities and seek refuge in mountain and beach resorts. If you must go during August, hotels will frequently offer special rates. If you don’t see a specific promotion on their site, ask if there might be an unadvertised special. Do make

sure, though, that they have adequate AC (for which there will be an additional charge). To help minimize the effects of the heat, consider a location by the sea, with a pool, in the mountains, or some destination less well-known.

➔ **The most famous tourist centers (Venice, Florence and Rome) are never empty . . . only occasionally less full.** This also applies to popular destinations such as Amalfi, Siena, Cortona, Verona, anywhere else that’s become part of the standard itinerary. In the top three, however, you can never expect a true “off” season where lodging is concerned. To get that famous guidebook’s recommended for Room #32, book three to six months in advance (see Ten Tips for the Traveler Abroad later in this document).


➔ **By far, the least expensive time of year to travel is from November 1st until the week before Easter.** The weather is less predictable but not unpleasant, so if you’re willing to carry an umbrella, forego your summer sandals, and always keep a pullover handy, there can be great rewards to traveling this time of year. The crowds are practically nonexistent, which makes it nicer for wandering and reduces waiting at museums, restaurants, and tourist offices. And since this is officially off-season, prices for lodging and services can drop significantly.

Sightseeing hours will be shorter, the sun will set earlier, and the chance to sit in that outdoor cafe will present itself a bit less often. Airfares will be lowest (excluding holidays), though, after October 31st until the end of March. Fares rise slightly before Easter, again after, then again in May and June, and aside from the occasional sale will remain higher through September. Fares can drop somewhat in August and October, but you may have to play a waiting game with the airlines to get that sale fare.

➔ **May and October are simply spectacular.** Airline prices aren't at their lowest, or their highest. The crowds are only partially assembled in the most popular sites (and in late October, they're beginning to disperse); the weather is temperate during the day and requires no more than a sweater or light jacket in the evening. In May, everything is in full bloom — you'll fill up a storage card photographing the flora alone. Late October and November bring roasted chestnuts, new wine, and fresh-pressed olive oil, the harvest of which you may even be able to participate in if you like (not easy work, but rewarding all the same).



➔ **Holidays in Italy are expensive, but fabulous.** If you must spend the holiday abroad, you're planning to splurge anyway (airfares and hotel rates will both be higher). For reveling among bustling, energetic masses, there's simply nothing like Christmas or New Year's with Venice or Rome, Verona, Naples, or even Palermo as your backdrop.

 **WORTH NOTING:** It's not unusual for a hotel to close off-season from November through February, depending they're located. If you haven't had a response from your e-mails or faxes, this could be why.

WHERE SHOULD WE GO?

This decision can be the most intimidating of all. *La Bella Italia* is the country you've dreamed of all your life, featuring so much of the art, history and geographical beauty you learned of in school and have so often seen idyllically depicted in favorite films. How to choose?

We hope you don't think we mean to beg the question, but we believe that in the end, *it simply doesn't matter*.

People work very hard on their itineraries to make sure they find just the right places, and all return after their travels thrilled with their experiences. The secret is, everyone enjoys everywhere they go, so you can hardly make a mistake in deciding.

What will be far more important to you as an independent traveler than the *where*, is the *how*. To help with your decisions, a host of guidebooks (we list some favorites in the Appendix of *Italy: Instructions for Use*) will provide you with rich, detailed descriptions of Italy's various regions. But beyond that, traveling on your own with preparation, curiosity, and an understanding that the entire country was not created solely for the foreign tourist will bring you an unforgettable journey, regardless of the destination.

The “how” component of this equation instead concerns the human element of the travel itinerary. To reduce the likelihood of strained relations among fellow travelers, keep these key considerations in mind:

- **Have each person in your group voice their desires and expectations for the trip.** One person doesn't want to miss the Forum, someone else wants a vineyard tour, another wants a day at a thermal spa, another wants to “see where the winds blow them.” Try to plan an itinerary incorporating as many of your and your companions' specific desires as possible.
- **Remember that even though you're in a group, not everybody travels the same way.** As traveling companions, you'll be spending an extraordinary amount of time together, but there's nothing that says you have to be attached at the

hip. For example, in the morning there are those who are the popper-uppers, and others who are the roller-overs. If somebody wants to sleep in, let 'em. “But you'll miss the Palatine Gallery and all the Raphaels!” It's their loss. Just set a time to meet before dinner in Impruneta and let it go. (If you're the roller-over however, understand you'll be on your own taking the bus or taxi to meet later — and don't be late!)

➤ **Once you're in Italy, solid, irrefutable information can be hard to come by.** Asking Italians on the street is no problem, but they may not speak English and will have an inhabitant's knowledge, not a travel specialist's. You can stop by the Tourist Information office if you have time and it's nearby. However, understanding that guessing, wandering, occasional dead-ends, and unanticipated closings are inevitable and part of it all can lessen frustration, loss of time, and stress among overly-tired travel companions. Gather as much pertinent information as you can, keep it handy, always have a Plan B, and remember to breathe.

➤ **If you're traveling in a group and something's not to your liking, balance your consideration of the group with finding a way to take care of your own needs.** Trust us: wherever two or more of you are gathered in a foreign country for any length of time, there are bound to be disparities among you which

can easily lead to distinct discomfort. It's critical that each person understands that keeping things in balance is as much an individual responsibility as it is of the group as whole. Voice your wishes, but be flexible, considerate, and respectful — and don't be afraid to take care of yourself when the alternative is being mad at everyone else for the rest of the trip.

WHERE SHOULD WE STAY?

Let's talk stars (hotel stars, that is). Because this may be our once-in-a-lifetime trip to Italy, we'll want everything to be perfect. Also, being of the opinion that "More is always better," we'll want as many stars on our hotel**** as we can afford, right? And what might the answer to that question be?

Dipende.

It's critical to understand that the number of stars a hotel has been assigned does not necessarily equate to the quality of the hotel. Rather, the stars signify the number of rooms it has, the facilities and amenities it can certify that it offers, and the higher price these entitle it to charge. Naturally, we'll assume that a four-star hotel is better maintained, and that may be true — but it may not be, and the number of stars will give you no indication of that. A lovely twelve-room one-star may have friendly, efficient service, stunning views,

and Wi-Fi, but no night porter; while a fifty-room four-star may supply you with a phone, hair dryer, and a minibar filled with exorbitantly priced Coca-Colas, but be poorly maintained with an overworked, jaded staff. So, how do you know?

An expert, reliable referral and an honest description are the best ways to choose your lodgings: consult travel guides, chat forums, and travel agents (if they've been there recently). But be forewarned: if a hotel is being recommended to you, it's being recommended to most of the other 3-4 million other American travelers to Italy, and they're making their reservations earlier and earlier — just as you're being advised to do.

When considering lodging, there are many alternatives to a hotel, or *albergo*. You may encounter the terms B&B, *residenza*, *pensione*, *locanda* and more lodging terms, much more indicative of the type of lodging once upon a time, but that have gradually lost their meaning as they've become more professional, cultures have blended, and an inconsistent star system has become more common. In general however, lodging can be divided into these categories:



Hotel (*albergo*) — Rooms, often with breakfast included, no minimum stay, a variable cancellation policy (normally based on the number of rooms in the hotel), likely guaranteed with a credit card.

B&Bs (*pensione, locanda*) — Rooms, often in converted town or country homes, hosted by the owners, offering breakfast and sometimes partial board, usually with minimum stays of several days and non-refundable deposits.

Apartments — Self-catering lodgings that vary from a studio to several bedrooms and include kitchen facilities, often with minimum-stay and advance deposits or payments. May stock provisions in advance on request. No stars, just descriptions.

The Agriturismo (villa or farm stays) — Entire villas, apartments, or sometimes rooms, often with a one-week minimum stay and payment, or at least a deposit, in advance. The original agriturismo was a working farm that accepted paying visitors. These days the term is used to also refer to abandoned villas and farm buildings that have been converted into gracious, contemporary lodging that functions more like a self-catering country estate. May also include partial and even full board (of excellent fare).

Along with general categories and numbers of stars, keep these things in mind when researching lodging:

Buildings are older, and rooms are smaller. A friend of mine who works the front desk of a small Venice hotel says he can always tell, after a certain type of (often American) guest checks in, that he'll receive a phone call almost immediately, complaining that the guest's room is too small. "Too small for what?" my friend asks. He offers to try to find a larger room in another hotel, but when he tells the guest the price, there's a sharp intake of breath. The guest decides to stay. (This scene is regularly repeated.)

Our poor traveler simply didn't know what to expect. Historic town centers (where we all want to stay) can date back centuries, when walls were thicker and rooms were smaller (or bigger, and have now been divided up). We're used to our own Do-Drop-Inn chains, most of which were built from scratch in the middle of a cornfield, or by clear-cutting a stand of pines or a few city blocks, with little size limitation. Italian hotels have been eked out of buildings that originated without wiring, plumbing, and maybe even glass in the windows; the ensuite bath (almost standard by now) has often had to be wedged into a space that never knew there would even exist such a thing (hence the bath-down-the-hall concept).

So, if having a large hotel room is a priority, you'll likely pay a good deal more. Or, you might choose instead to stay in the country in a villa or *agriturismo*, where everything is more expansive, or perhaps outside the historic center, where the hotels are newer and more resemble what we're used to.


To get a room when there are no rooms, forego the toilet in yours. Having decided to take your chances without reserving ahead, you've arrived at a popular destination late in the afternoon. If there are any rooms at all, those that remain will probably have a *servizio esterno*, or a toilette across the hall. You may still have a shower and sink in the room however, and the toilet itself may even be yours alone, but outside the room. So, if getting back on the train to look for a room in the next town doesn't appeal to you, a little flexibility (with very little inconvenience) might instead get your room booked and your problem solved.



Don't fear that a sub-three star may not be welcoming and pristine. Italian households are famously fastidious, so if rooms are in short supply, your heart's set on a night in Lucca, and there's a

room available at a recommended less-than three-star, don't be afraid to book it. You'll no doubt be pleasantly surprised.

When rooms are scarce, search for large-capacity hotels. Many recommended hotels throughout Italy only have eight, twelve, or perhaps twenty rooms. When you've waited to book and you've run into a scarcity of available rooms, start concentrating your search on bigger hotels.

 **WORTH NOTING:** The *Piano terra* refers to the ground floor (our first floor), *primo piano* is the first (our second floor).

Forego the view to get peace and quiet. A view of a lively piazza is always enchanting, but it may stay quite lively well into the wee hours. If it's too warm to close the windows... Just ask about the noise and specify your preference in your e-mail or fax when making your reservation. (Don't forget to pack a pair of earplugs — they can be real sleep-savers in this, and many other situations.)

MODES OF TRAVEL

Two Approaches

You have ten days to two weeks, and you want to see as much as possible. How do you do it? There are two fun-

damental approaches to traveling: town by town, or making one or more home bases with day trips.

When you travel town by town, you create a logical itinerary of places you'd like to visit, allowing one or more days in each location. If you're very organized, you can even stop off in intermediate towns for lunch and a look around before traveling on to your final destination. The main advantage of this type of travel is that you will certainly "see" a lot, or at least cover a significant amount of territory. (Your new digital camera will prove of great value in recording what you might otherwise not be able to recall.) The disadvantage is that you'll spend a great deal of time in transit mode: preparing to leave, packing, checking out and getting to the car or train, traveling, arriving, locating the hotel, checking in, reorienting, and so on. A day or two later, you do it all over again. If you're a highly energetic, non-stop type of person, this travel approach might be just the ticket.

The alternate approach is what we personally prefer: the home-base, day-trip mode. Instead of being on the move every day or so, choose one to three diverse locales, strategically positioned to allow for a variety of day trips, or even overnights, for explor-

ing nearby sites and towns while avoiding the need to transfer to them. For these shorter trips, you'll carry an overnight bag at most, and avoid the necessity of packing and hauling everything you brought, everywhere you go.

For example, if you choose to stay a week in Venice, Verona, or Vicenza, you'll have the possibility to also explore all those towns, plus Mantova, Padova, Trieste, the villas of Palladio, and the hill towns of the Veneto. Combine that with a Tuscan location such as Lucca, from which you can explore Florence, the Cinque Terre, the Tuscan coastline, the Garfagnana, and Chianti Val d'Elsa. In every region throughout Italy, there are

endless options for this type of travel, which will both allow you to settle in and become a bit more familiar with your own surroundings, without giving up the opportunity to take in a lot more in the process.


So, just assess your energy, goals for your trip, calculate your packing tolerance and how you'd like to spend your time, and you shouldn't have any problem deciding which method is right for you.

Cost vs. Time, Convenience and Comfort

If you have an unlimited budget, you can skip this section. However, independent travelers often seek to spend their



money where it will benefit them the most. To that aim, it helps to know when cutting certain costs will save you real money in the end, and when spending it can make a real difference in how much you see and how road-weary you are when you see it.

 **WORTH NOTING:** There is normally no penalty for renting a car in one city and dropping it off in another, unless they're extraordinarily far from each other, in two different countries, or the car is automatic. Check with your rental company for specifics.

For instance, how big a car should you choose? Will you be uncomfortable on the train in 2nd class? Do you need a rail pass, or can you buy point-to-point tickets? How much money do you need to spend on a hotel not to be disappointed? Are private tour guides worth the money? Here are some of the considerations to weigh in making decisions concerning time and budget:

➔ **Stay outside the tourist centers to save on high-priced hotels.** All the popular guidebooks will give you wonderful alternatives to the Venice-Florence/Tuscan-Rome itinerary, which is by far the most expensive. It's feasible to stay near these centers and visit them easily, while enjoying lower

lodging rates (and larger rooms sometimes) and the opportunity to explore the surrounding area as well.

➔ **Cars are expensive — and useless — in cities and towns.** If you're staying in a famous town center, you'll likely be prohibited from driving at all, except when dropping off your luggage at the hotel. You'll also be paying for parking and car rental anytime you're not driving. If you're staying in town, use trains to visit surrounding towns, and rent a car for a day for exploring or sojourning in the countryside.

ATTENZIONE: Cars with automatic transmission are more scarce and can increase the rental price significantly. If this is not acceptable, you have from now until your departure to learn to drive a stick! Seriously, there may be businesses in your area who offer manual transmission driving instruction; check the Yellow Pages.

➔ **If staying at a villa or *agriturismo*, a car will almost be a necessity.** Having one enables you to come and go as you please, and unlike staying in town, you won't pay for parking. If there's a train station nearby, you'll often be able to leave the car there at no charge while taking that overnight jaunt to Perugia. An alternative might be to opt for bike transportation, which will limit your sightseeing options but certainly allow you to become more intimate with what you do see.

➔ **Use taxis when they offer you the most convenience, but stick to public transit for every day.** If you're particularly tired, or if it's particularly hot, cold, late, or possible to share with several people, spring for the taxi; however, using public transportation regularly is quite convenient, easy on the pocketbook, and will make you feel less like a tourist.

ATTENZIONE: Make sure to obtain an **International Driver's Permit** (effectively a translation of your own driver's license). You may not need it to actually rent your car, but you can risk a heavy fine if you're stopped and are without one. They're easily obtained from your nearest AAA office, for example.

➔ **Where luggage is concerned, less is much more convenient.** We think Mr. Frommer said it best: "Never take more than you can carry single-handedly when running for a bus or a train." This is even more critical if you're traveling solo, and there's no one to watch your bags while you run to buy the bus tickets. In any case, you will be handling your own luggage most, if not all of the time, and the benefits of a manageable amount will far outweigh any gained by packing for every possible contingency.

➔ **Evaluate the value of guided tours.** Because most of us have forgotten whatever little European history we once

knew, the right guide can bring whole other dimensions to your surroundings, bringing them to life and enriching your subsequent experience of place—not to mention allowing you to bypass museum lines). They can be an especially good deal if you're in a small group and can share the cost. On a budget, self-guided walking tours can be had from audio guides, books, and sometimes through the Tourist Information office as well.

➔ **Book popular museum tickets in advance to avoid wasting (lots of) time waiting in line.** If this is an available option for a particular museum, there'll be information at the Tourist Information office, or on city Web sites. If it's not possible, plan on visiting museums in the afternoon when lines will be shorter (after verifying current hours).

➔ **If you won't be long, stand for you *caffè*.** There's frequently a cover charge (or *coperto*) anytime you sit at a table to be served. If you're having dinner or intending to pass the afternoon people watching and writing postcards, it's worth the extra euro or two. If you're just grabbing a *caffè* and *brioche* on your way to the museum, order at the bar with the rest of the locals—it's quicker and will cost a third as much.

➔ **The house wine will be just fine—but don't bypass the bottle.** We can pay \$6 for a glass of wine we have to hold our noses to drink. Italian eateries offer young, locally-produced vintages that are perfect for lunches and casual meals, and a *quarto* (quarter liter, about two glasses) will cost less than the soft drink your friend is having.


If your wine palate is becoming more and more appreciative, however, make sure you accompany more “intentional” meals with excellent, well-chosen wines. It doesn't have to be expensive; your server is well-informed and will be happy to suggest something that's within your budget.

RAIL PASS, or POINT-to-POINT?

Whether a rail pass can offer you either convenience or cost savings will depend on both the type of train travel you intend to do, and how much. The cost of a train ticket varies widely depending on the type of train and length of voyage, while the cost of a rail-pass day does not. If you use a day on a rail pass for a round-trip to Lucca from Florence, you can pay €40 or more for a first-class ticket that would normally cost €9 for a train that has no first-class cars.

Rail passes are rarely cost effective for travel inside Italy, even on the Eurostar and the *Alta-velocità* (fast trains that run between principal cities, whose tickets are more costly,

particularly when traveling first class). For these trains, you must still reserve and pay an additional supplement which in turn increases the cost of the rail-pass day. There are available rail pass discounts, however, if you're under 26 or if you're traveling in a group of two to five people. To determine if a rail pass will more economical, divide the total rail pass cost by the number days you'll be traveling; then, compare corresponding fares for specific travel on the TrenItalia rail site. It's rare that you come out ahead, but at least you'll have the information you need to make an informed decision.

 **WORTH NOTING:** The Trenitalia Pass can be purchased before you go from your travel agent, from online Italian rail travel sites, and in Italy in principal train stations.

It pays to anticipate the kind of rail travel you're planning to do in order to determine if a rail pass is the most logical and cost-effective choice for your trip. Read the chapter Getting Around: By Train in *Italy*: *Instructions for Use* to better understand the rail system and how it operates, including the table providing sample fare comparisons.

PARTENZE				
destinazione	ind. suss.	cat.	ore	bin.
ROMA T.NI	VIA FIRENZE S.M.N.	1 ^{ES*}	14.33	7
VICENZA		REG	14.37	13
ADRIA		REG	14.42	20
UDINE-TRIESTE	VIA CORRELLANO	REG	14.50	12
GENOVA	VIA MILANO CLE	1 ^{ES}	14.54	8
TRIESTE	VIA PORTOGUARO	REG	15.01	4

Preparing To Go

LUGGAGE and WARDROBE

When you travel here at home, you pack up all your stuff, stash it in the

car (more for a cross-country trip, less if flying), and either head for the hills or the airport. The furthest you have to manually transport your luggage is from the car to the ticket counter or the entrance to the hotel — often with some assistance — so concern with amount of luggage is largely irrelevant.

This is not the case in Europe, and certainly not in Italy, and certainly not if you're in anything but the money-is-no-object set.

➤ **It's always advisable to take more, smaller bags rather than any big ones.** While locating porters at an airport should pose little problem, unless you're staying at four- or five-star hotels they'll be costly and difficult to find. There may be few (if any) porters available in train stations, and lugging massive bags on and off trains and up and down aisles is exhausting, time consuming, and makes you feel quite conspicuous (even though the people you're making wait to get on the train will offer you a hand). Larger bags are also more


difficult to arrange in a car trunk, while two softer, smaller ones will offer much more flexibility.

Another luggage consideration are the stairs — there are lots of stairs. Stairs to the lobby in some hotels; stairs in train stations, stairs over bridges; walkways made of stairs leading to the charming hotels in the charming hill towns; stairs to the lovely second-floor apartment in the villa, and up to the Amalfi hotel with the spectacular view. Limit the size and number of bags, and you'll avoid temptation on your third location change to hoist one of them off the bridge into the canal.

➤ **Thicker is better than wider.** Pack for agility rather than total preparedness: in bags no wider than the aisle of an airplane, whether or not you plan to carry them on. Allot each person a twenty-two-inch bag (the type with a zipper for expansion will add space for precious purchases on your return), or perhaps a duffel bag. Then, include a smaller bag that can piggy-back on the larger one, and an oversize shoulder bag if you need it.

➤ **The more wheels, the merrier.** It's hard to anticipate the odd time when they might be a lifesaver. The more bags that have wheels for rolling, the less likely you'll have to test your endurance running the length of the train platform or hustling to make an airline connection.

If you can restrict yourself to these limitations, we guarantee you'll be perfectly comfortable maneuvering by yourself when you must, and searching for a porter or a luggage cart will be a choice, not a necessity.

 **WORTH NOTING:** Whether pay or *gratis*, luggage carts are fairly plentiful at airports, and you'll find them at larger train stations if you search diligently (they're all in use). Smaller stations may have stairs, no carts, and no elevators, and there will be no carts at bus stations.



Wardrobe Tips

It's actually quite easy to pack an efficient, comfortable wardrobe — it's often the non-wardrobe items that take up the most space and add the most weight. Follow these guidelines to assure you'll have plenty to wear and still conform to your self-imposed luggage restrictions:

➤ **No matter how long your stay, pack only for one week.** You'll have ample opportunity to do laundry if you're staying longer, and depend-

ing on the item, you'll be able to wear many more than once without laundering. Smaller items such as socks and under things can be washed out overnight if need be. As long as you're confident the weather will be fairly consistent during your stay, there's really no need to pack for a longer period.

➤ **If you choose the right shoes, two pair will do.** Italy is a very physical country, and you'll probably be on your feet much more than you normally are at home — touring museums, crisscrossing *piazze*, exploring cobblestone lanes, scurrying for buses and trains — and almost all on marble, stone, and concrete. Choose shoes that are made for giving your feet the support they need (tennis shoes are not the best choice), and don't make the mistake of purchasing a pair you wear for the first time on your trip. There are many types of shoes that will be stylish, comfortable, and appropriate for whatever attire you choose for the day or evening. For your second pair, choose something dressier if you like, or heartier for serious hiking.


➤ **Knit away.** Minimize clothing that will require an iron, and you'll simplify your traveling life significantly. You won't have to dedicate valuable luggage space to a weighty travel iron, or worry about the hotel having one available at the right moment.

➔ **Choose a palette.** If you're a slave to fashion — or at least prefer to arrive in a country not looking, as David Sedaris puts it in *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, as if you've come to mow its lawn — you can pack efficiently and still be assured that you'll have plenty to wear. If you choose clothing that coordinates as much as possible, instead of "outfits," you'll look good, be comfortable and still never have to worry about what's clean and what's not. One technique is to throw everything you plan to take on the bed, then remove all but two coordinating colors and the neutrals. You'll look less "touristy," and never be stuck with the only remaining clean pieces being impossible to combine.

➔ **Layer when you expect unpredictable weather.** In April, May, and October, the weather can be toasty during the day, and depending on your location, occasionally drippy and even chilly at night. If you're doing any active sightseeing (and much of it will be), you'll warm up inside a toasty trattoria or as you stride to make your appointments, and cool down exploring cathedrals and the art within. If you're traveling during these periods, include both under-wear (cami-soles, tanks, tees, and turtlenecks) and outerwear (a cardigan, pullover, or jacket) that you can layer on or peel off as the weather mutates.

Packing for the Airlines

As we are all aware, airline carry-on luggage restrictions can change at a moments notice. At the time of this writing, you are permitted one carry-on bag and one personal bag (i.e., your purse if you have one), and if you're taking a computer, it will have to be in one of those. Airlines restrict weight, size, and contents, so to avoid a frantic reshuffling episode at the ticket counter, confirm restrictions when you book, and again as you near departure.

 **WORTH NOTING:** It's never advisable to pack anything of real value in checked luggage, especially if you have a connecting flight. With security requirements as strict as they are, you can no longer assume that a bag will stay locked or shrink-wrapped — or that anyone who discovers your digital camera during any of a series of security scans will leave it there.

MONEY MATTERS

The Euro replaced the Italian *lira* as legal tender in Italy on January 1, 2002. The Euro banknote is a dolled-up dollar whose bills get larger as the denominations do (see the Money chapter for a few more specifics).

Plan on using the ATM for obtaining Euro cash, and likewise on paying in cash more often than you're accustomed to. The Italian ATM, often referred to as the *Bancomat*, offers the most convenience and the best rate of exchange compared other options, including bank exchange. Cash machines are quite common throughout Italy, speak excellent English, and are connected to all major banking networks. *Bancomats* are available 24/7 and are located in airports, train stations, and almost everywhere there's a bank.



Make sure you bring at least two cards that will work in a cash machine. Bring a check/debit card that can be used both in a *Bancomat*, and like a charge card wherever merchants accept them. Then, ask your bank to issue a ATM card exclusively for cash machines, to be used as a backup if something happens to your main card.

As you travel, keep your main card in your wallet and store your backup card in your suitcase, money belt, or other separate location. If something unexpected happens to either one of them, you'll still have access to cash.

Although advisable only in emergencies because of the exorbitant fees involved, credit cards may also work in the *Bancomat* — just make sure you have a PIN for each card, and that you understand any and all potential fees involved.

Some additional suggestions:

- **Let your bank know you'll be traveling.** Banks and credit card companies sometimes block usage temporarily if they think someone else may be using the card.
- **Verify your bank fees for international ATM withdrawals.** They may be higher than that for regular other-bank ATMs, so to avoid unexpected surprises on your bank statement on your return, verify them beforehand. 1% of withdrawal amount is also the most you should pay; discuss account options with your bank if they're higher than that.
- **Raise your daily ATM withdrawal limit.** In case you need an unusual amount of cash in one day, make sure your bank will allow you to withdraw an adequate amount.
- **There's no need to purchase Euro currency** to bring with you — just head for the ATM on your arrival at the airport or train station. The exception might be if you feel the dollar value is heading in the wrong direction and you want to stock up ahead of time.

➔ **Obtain non-toll-free phone numbers for banks (credit cards should have them on the back).** Toll-free numbers can be tricky to access from abroad, if possible at all. Credit cards often provide these numbers on the backs of their cards, either for toll access or calling collect. Copy these numbers and keep the information separate from the cards themselves (see Copy Important Documents below).

➔ **Don't count on Travelers Checks.** Once a travel staple and a reliable currency substitute, Travelers Checks these days are more a liability than a convenience, and have become much more difficult to tender in most locations. A better choice would be to make sure you have multiple cards that function in a *Bancomat*.

➔ **Purchase a money belt** that's as light as possible and either hangs from your neck or straps around your waist. This is the best place to store valuables when in transit: passports, airline tickets, extra currency and spare credit/debit cards, along with a copy of critical phone and credit card numbers, etc.

For a more detailed discussion on safety and warnings concerning pickpockets, please see Avoiding Trouble in the **MONEY** chapter in *Italy: Instructions for Use*.

CELL PHONES: Can We Talk?

This discussion ought to be a simpler one...but it won't be. Just remember: everything's easy when you know how.

If you'd prefer the I-Just-Don't-Want-To-Deal-With-It option, you can simply choose to rent a cell phone. There are a variety of companies that offer this possibility, from Cellular Abroad, to Telesial, to Daystar Wireless. Even AutoEurope offers cell phone rentals. However, as with most I-Just-Don't-Want-To-Deal-With-It options, it can be an expensive one. If you'd prefer to understand a bit more about the process and make an informed choice, brace yourselves, and read on.

There are two determinations that must be made: first, that you have a phone that will work in Europe; and if so, what service provider you want to use with it.

Will My Cell Phone Work?

Here's that famous response again: *dipende*. For a cell phone to function in Europe, it must:

- work on a GSM network. (If there's a SIM, it's GSM.)
- operate on a European frequency (900/1800).

In North America, the various service providers use one of two types of networks: GSM and CDMA. Italian and European cell networks are GSM only, so you must first have a phone

that functions on a GSM network. Your service provider can verify this for you; or, check to see whether your phone has a removable SIM chip that fits in a slot in the back of your phone, normally under the battery. If there is no SIM, your phone is not a GSM phone, and it will work neither in Italy, or anywhere else in Europe. You'll instead need a different cell phone, skip ahead to [I Have the Wrong Kind of Cell Phone](#).

Next, because cell phones used in Europe and North America operate on different frequencies, the phone you take to Europe must operate on a frequency of 900/1800. If you choose a dual, tri, or quad-band phone, it will operate using the frequencies utilized in both locations (US: 850/1900; Europe 900/1800).

My Cell Phone Qualifies. Now What?

If your phone meets the above two requirements, you know that it will operate in Europe. Now, you'll now only need to choose a service provider. Your options are:

- Use your current US service provider (\$1 or more per minute for making and receiving calls).
- Use an Italian service provider (pay ,15 - ,20 euro cents per minute for calls to Italy. Incoming calls are free.)

For the first option, you'll leave your SIM in place, and use your provider to connect with the Italian cell networks to make and receive calls (it's the roaming charges that make this option an expensive one). Check with your cellular service provider to see if they have an international rate plan available. A common call rate is \$1 or more per minute for all calls incoming and outgoing (with no extra charge to connect), and if your phone will work in Italy, you'll avoid any phone rental charge.

You could also rent or purchase pre-paid SIM card with a local number from an Italian provider (there are several: Tim, Vodafone, Wind, and Blu), to use in your phone. When using an Italian SIM, the language for your phone operation will be English. Although SMS and voice messages from the service provider may be in Italian, the operation is fairly straightforward, and usually poses little problem. The per-minute call cost will significantly less, and because within Italy only the caller pays, you'll never pay for any call you receive.

So, check with your service provider for their international plans, see the [Appendix](#) for other recommendations, or if you're more adventurous, prefer a more economical option and care to spend your planning time to investigate, consider an Italian prepaid cell phone.

I Have The Wrong Kind of Cell Phone.

If this will be one of many trips to Europe, consider purchasing a cell phone that will work there, either in Italy (where you can find one for about €70 or less, sold unlocked from any vendor), or in the US (unlocked, from ebay.com, for example). You can then purchase an Italian pre-paid SIM and add credit as you go.

ATTENZIONE: There is one caveat: U.S. service providers “lock” cell phones for use solely with SIMs they issue; therefore, you must **unlock** your cell phone before it will work with a SIM issued by any other provider (US or otherwise). They should be able to give you information on how to unlock your phone, or use an online service like thetravelinsider.com.


If you're looking for a cell for this trip only, it's probably best to return to the I-Just-Don't-Want-To-Deal-With-It option.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Electricity

Electric current in Italy (and Europe) is 220v, while in North America it's 120v. If you're taking electronic devices that are not dual-voltage, you'll need a *voltage converter*, available from many travel stores.


This is much less common or as necessary as it once was, however, as many portable devices such as hair dryers, laptops, cell phones, and digital cameras are dual voltage, which makes purchasing and carrying a weighty converter unnecessary. In this case, you will need only American to Italian plug adapter (with two small, round pins) for the wall plug, that will be both far less expensive and lighter for traveling.

 **WORTH NOTING:** Review the power information on the label or manual for your device or appliance. If the capacity is 110-120v, you'll need a voltage converter; if it reads **120 - 220v**, the plug adapter is all you'll need.

You can order plug adapters online from a company such as www.world-import.com/plugs.htm, or by doing a Google search on "plug adapter." In Italy, plug adapters are inexpensive and readily available at almost any electric supply store. Ask at your hotel, or look for an *Elettrodomestici* store.

Important Document Records

Copy, scan, or otherwise make a record of all passports, credit cards, toll-access numbers, prescriptions (in their generic form as opposed to brand name), your itinerary, and any other critical documents. Leave paper, e-mail, or easily accessible copies with a friend or relative, take paper copies, a CD backup, or even a USB drive with you. Be sure to store these copies separately from the items themselves in the event something unforeseen happens.

 **WORTH NOTING:** Record your eyeglass or contact lens prescription. (Even if nothing gets lost, you may spot a chic pair of frames you can't resist...)

Health and Travel Insurance


You will never be turned away for medical care anywhere in Italy, no matter what your coverage is at home. Check your own health and homeowners' insurance policies though, and review any specific coverage for exceptional situations, such as transportation costs for having to return home unexpectedly, either because of your own health, a turn-of-events at home, or for other unforeseeable emergencies.

A number of reputable companies offer travel insurance at varying but reasonable rates, depending on the type of cover-

age. There are a variety of plans covering trip cancellation, trip interruption, and other extenuating circumstances. In these unpredictable times, we highly recommend choosing one of these options, if only for the peace of mind they afford.

Air Travel Tips

If you have a connection, review it with the ticket agent while checking in for your initial flight. If he can, have them note your arrival and departure gates and terminal on the connecting airport map. (You can review airport layouts on their Web sites, and there will often be an airport map provided in the envelope you receive at check in and en-route in the back of in-flight magazines.)

 **WORTH NOTING:** Keep in mind that you will not be penalized for flying into one city (or country, for that matter) and out of another. This is referred to as Open Jaws travel and affords much more flexibility when planning your itinerary, while reducing time in-transit.

This can be especially important if you have a short layover. With the intense security precautions that are in place these days, delays can sometimes be insurmountable without assistance. If you're concerned about the time you have, find the nearest airline representative on your arrival and (respectfully)

ask for help. You may request that someone escort you to the connecting gate — avoiding delays in immigration and security — although we always hope the airline will have determined in advance that this will be necessary and make an announcement prior to landing.

In the air, there are some important points to remember that will aid in your recovery from jet lag:


➔ **Drink as much water as you can during your flight.**

Pressurized air is inherently dehydrating, as are lack of sleep and alcohol, all of which will contribute to the jet lag you'll experience when you arrive. The more water you can drink (take an empty water bottle and ask the flight attendant to fill it for you), the more you'll help your body counter the dehydrating effects of air travel, thus lessening jet lag.

➔ **When traveling from west to east, sleep on the plane.**

Use a mask, ear-plugs, and an over-the-counter sleep inducer if you need it, but in the end there's nothing like sleep to help shorten jet lag. Sleep on the flight, and through the whole first night upon arrival. We've heard the effect of sleeping

on the plane described as trying to convince your body it's a short night, which will help the inevitable jet lag to be as brief as possible. From east to west, it's not quite as important to sleep, as your body will translate it as an extended day (look forward to popping up bright and early, say 4-ish, for the next several days on your return home).

 **WORTH NOTING:** This may seem like an odd recommendation, but be sure to take a good pair of earplugs along. Whether in a hotel, plane, or train, they can provide a very simple solution to getting the critical rest you need, affording just enough separation from unfamiliar surroundings that can be noisier than you're used to.

➔ **Minimize your intake of food and alcohol en-route.**

This is more important from west to east. It can be harder to sleep while digesting a meal (try to choose sleep over food). Alcohol is dehydrating and will add its effects to the pressurized air and short-sleep night, adding insult to injury as your body attempts to adjust itself once you arrive.



Seven Tips for the Traveler Abroad

Throughout more than a decade of traveling extensively (and now living) in Italy, we've assembled these suggestions from

the many errors we've made, along with common experiences reported by and observed about Americans (as we are one) traveling abroad. There are probably good reasons why we have these specific tendencies; perhaps other nationalities have their own Top Ten. In any case, there's a good chance many of these will apply to you, as they have to us.

➔ **Leave the United States behind.** This sounds like obvious advice, doesn't it? Yet, we feel compelled to make it our number-one tip. If you're not a frequent traveler outside the country, it can come as a shock that people not only do things differently, but prefer it their way. We don't understand this mainly because we don't live there.

In our insulated environment, we know what we like and can expect, feel perfectly comfortable demanding it and being accommodated accordingly. Once abroad — especially in Italy — it's best to shift into discovery mode (oh, that out-of-

control feeling) to get the most enjoyment out of your trip. Adopting the "Let's see how good you are at giving me what I want" attitude (sadly, not uncommon), you'll surely be disappointed, and often. You might better travel to Switzerland or Germany (or Florida), where order and logic reign supreme.

➔ **Book early to get that Room With A View.** There are two to four million of us traveling to Italy every year (along with eight million Germans, by the way), and all of us are reading the same guidebooks and researching the same Web sites for every charming twelve-room hotel from Venice to Palermo. If you're traveling from May to October, especially on a weekend, and you're not willing to do without a view, bathroom, or an ideal location, book lodging on your preferred travel dates as early as you can; then snag airline reservations later when you're comfortable with fare offerings.

➔ **However much luggage you're taking, it's too much.** There's a common "take everything" approach that makes much more sense when you're loading up for a road trip than for traveling in Europe. Concentrate instead on efficiency — you'll be much happier unencumbered when navigating unfamiliar territory (even the Florence train station). You're not traveling to the Antarctic — you can always pick up the occasional item 'round almost any corner.

➤ Plan ahead for those experiences that are really important to you. It's easy to create an expectation of the Idyllic Italy we see in films, one in which we wander aimlessly to discover what our travel fate holds. If you have your heart set on a particular activity, though, waiting until the last minute to organize it will inevitably fail. You'll use your limited time trying to simply acquire information, something that can rarely be done expediently once in the country. Can we do a wine tour? (Yes, but it's booked up today, they don't offer it tomorrow, and you're leaving the next.)

Acquire good maps and review them carefully before you drive (it won't help). Remember that it will be difficult to eat (well) after 3 p.m. and before 7:30 p.m., or find an attended gas station in more remote areas during lunch hour, or *ora di pranzo*.

➤ Don't try to see too much in too short a period of time, whether in one day or ten. Give yourself plenty of time to practice the approach of *La Dolce Vita*. Remember, each time you change locations you lose all or part of a day. Relocating always involves packing and preparation time the night before, the transfer itself, locating new lodgings and checking in, and getting oriented once again. Slow down, allow time for rest and renewal. You don't have to see everything this trip; if you like it, trust us, you'll be back.

Try traveling with less of an intention to "do" a town, and more on finding a way to absorb its character. Fellow travelers will quiz you: Did you do Orivieto? Were you here or there or there? "We found the very best cantina" (out of thousands?), or, visited that famous butcher (that's right, Sting Was There).

If you're instead looking to connect more with the culture itself, look for opportunities to incorporate a bit of everyday Italy, and not just the pre-paid, pre-packaged one. Perhaps you'll have a chance to visit an absolutely unknown coffee bar more than once — you'll be recognized the second time, without a doubt (then don't tell anybody where it is).

➤ **Remember that Italy is a country, not a theme park.** Because there's so much to see, it's only natural to view Italy as having been created specifically as a resort — it's been a tourist destination for centuries. It's tempting to expect English translations everywhere, crystal-clear directions and signage throughout the country, along with opening hours convenient to our needs. Before you even begin researching airfares, understand that this will simply not be the case. Destination Italy will also include traditional Italian values, culture, and approach to life; the more you search for this authentic Italy, the more important it will be to surrender to whatever you find there.

➤ For Americans, this one fact can be the most difficult to accept: **sometimes there's nothing to be done.** Operating in a strange environment can be a real test of your patience, but that's part of what we must expect when we travel. You'll inevitably encounter an irritating hitch here and there, usually when you least expect it. In these instances, it can be tempting to adopt a "Who's in charge here?" attitude, but trust us: your best strategy will be simply to ask for help. Pounding the counter or whipping out a credit card in an attempt to make something impossible materialize will get you exactly . . . *niente, nulla*. You'll be far more likely to receive the assistance you require if you take on the role of an honored guest, not a paying customer.

➤ **Take a deep breath before drawing the conclusion that something doesn't work or isn't there,** just because you're not familiar with it. Calma, you've only been here a day or so, you're just over jet lag, and you've got a lot coming at you. Even if you're on a tight schedule, breathe once more; you're much more likely to find the answer you're looking for if you can search with a tranquil pair of eyes.

➤ **Remember that there's always someone nearby who understands exactly what you are saying, good or bad.** As Mark Twain warns us in *Innocents Abroad*, "The gentle

reader has no idea what a consummate ass he can become until he has traveled abroad." We Americans, for example, are known for our gregariousness (not a bad thing), and for speaking *ad alta voce*, and in our own expansive surroundings, we're not used to being overheard.

To avoid unintentionally insulting a mass of passersby in a moment of frustration in the more compact European environment (where almost everyone speaks some English), take time to read up on how things operate, double-check openings and closings, get the maps you need, and allow plenty of time to handle the unexpected.

➤ **Make the pickpocket pick someone else.** When in transit, dress comfortably and simply, instead of like an unconsciously wealthy traveler who's just put a boatload of cash exactly where an unconsciously wealthy traveler might put it — ready to be pilfered by an experienced pickpocket who knows them all too well.

Leave your most expensive jewelry at home — it's just one less thing to worry about. If you're carrying lots of cash, put the bulk of it in a money belt that straps around your waist or hangs from your neck, or at least inside something that closes securely. Never keep all your money in one place, especially when in transit and in crowded tourist centers

(popular *piazze*, train stations, etc.), and never turn your back on your luggage or your purse.

Finally, remember that there is no amount of will, determination, or even cash that can force this delicious country — much like the aging of a good wine — to move at anything other

than its own pace (that is why its artisans continue to flourish while they've all but disappeared from view here at home). Just see if you can switch gears a bit, let the culture seep into your pores, and see what you discover in the process.



Language:

Not What, But HOW.

If you're like most travelers, you're determined to learn what you can of the language before you board the plane. Perhaps you're taking classes, or listening to recorded instruction as you drive. Too often overlooked, however, is knowing how written words are pronounced. This can not only make a big difference in how well you connect with the life and the culture, but also in how quickly you find the duomo.

It's *Bru-SKET-ta*.

Italians are quite used to strangers getting themselves in a pickle and needing a hand. They'll never judge you for inaccurate pronunciation, but likely have no idea that you're asking for the Signa (SEEN-ya) exit off the autostrada if you ask where the SIG-na exit is. Making a single word understood, and being able to glean the important information from the assistance you'll receive can mean the difference between asking for a scarf or a shoe; and being able to find that wonderful Tuscan restaurant recommendation, instead of driving home hungry, and in the dark.

Pronunciation Keys: *La Pronuncia*

There's no word for "spell" in Italian. You instead ask, "How is it written?" Unlike English's endless exceptions, Italian is phonetically consistent: the way a word is spelled tells you how to say it, and vice-versa. Learn a few pronunciation rules, then, even if you have no idea what you're saying, you'll at least sound like you do!

What follows is a brief overview of the rules of pronunciation. As you prepare for your trip, revisit them at intervals until they come naturally to you — and they will.

VOWEL SOUNDS: *I Vocali*

Each vowel has only one vowel sound, and there are no silent vowels. So for example, anytime there's an **e** at the end of a word, you pronounce it. That means *grazie* is pronounced *gra zee-ey*, not *gra-see*. So:

The vowel	is always	as in	or	which means
a	ah	ball	<i>mamma</i>	mother
e	eh	heh	<i>treno</i>	train
i	ee	bee	<i>vino</i>	wine
o	oh	bowl	<i>no</i>	no
u	oo	boon	<i>luna</i>	moon

That wasn't so bad, was it? Remember, every time you see one of the vowels above, they'll be sounded in exactly the same way: whether at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. As you listen to your language recordings, listen for the specific the vowel sounds: a-e-re-o (airplane).

The COMBOS

Now it gets a bit trickier. To pronounce Italian words correctly, it's critical to understand that the sound of both c and g changes depending on what letter follows each of them. This is true for English as well, but unfortunately, much of Italian pronunciation is the reverse of what our native language-trained instincts tell us. The good news is that, as always, the pronunciation will be uniform, meaning the combos below will be sounded the same way every time they appear in any word. Get comfortable with these and you'll be well on your way.

C and G have one of two pronunciations: soft, as in *chair* and *gel*; and hard, as in *car* and *go*.

When followed by i or e, the sound is *always* soft:

c sounds like "ch" as in chip

g sounds like "j" as in gin

Any other time, the sound of the c or g is hard, like cab or gab — including ch or gh. This means:

The combo	sounds like	as in	which means
ci	chee	<i>ciao</i>	ciao!
ce	chey	<i>centro</i>	center
ge	j	<i>gelato</i>	ice cream
gi	j	<i>giorno</i>	day
ch	kuh	<i>chiuso</i>	closed
gh	guh	<i>ghiaccio</i>	ice

Hang on. This also applies when there's an s involved:

The combo	sounds like	as in	which means
sci	sh	<i>sciarpa</i>	scarf
sce	sh	<i>scelta</i>	choice
The combo	sounds like	as in	which means
sca	skah	<i>scarpa</i>	shoe
sco	skoh	<i>sconto</i>	discount
scu	skoo	<i>scusi</i>	excuse me
sche	skay	<i>scheda</i>	card
schi	ski	<i>schiuma</i>	foam

Don't give up. Here's the final hurdle. A gn or gl combination means you won't actually pronounce the g at all:

The combo	sounds like	is pronounced	and means
gn	<i>signore</i>	seen yo rey	sir, Mr.
	(ignore the g and put a y after the n)		
gli	<i>biglietto</i>	beel yet toh	ticket
	(Ignore the g and put a y after the l)		

For example, a popular destination in Tuscany that always presents a pronunciation challenge is *San Gimignano*, or *San Gee-meen-yah-no*.


For the language obsessed, here are some final hints. These are not as critical for your being understood, but good to know for your own understanding.

- **qu** is pronounced qw (as in quick) just as it is in English, not k as in the Spanish pronunciation.
- **S and Z.** An s between two vowels is pronounced z, as in *museo*; a z will be sounded as in *pizza*.

The letter	as in	is pronounced	and means
s	<i>museo</i>	mu zey o <i>not</i> mus sey o	museum
	<i>così</i>	co zee <i>not</i> cos see	like so

	<i>inglese</i>	een gley zey <i>not</i> eng glais say	English
z	<i>grazie</i>	grat sia <i>not</i> grassia	thank you

- **Look for the meaning of a word in its root.** Endings will change with the conjugation of verbs and pluralization of nouns, and as the word becomes an adjective or an adverb. In most cases though, you can refer to the root of a word for the key to its meaning.

 **WORTH NOTING:** Italian nouns are never made plural with Ss, but instead either with *i* (which replaces the *o* for masculine words) or *e* (which replaces the *a* for feminine words). There are, of course, exceptions, but generally you can use this as a general guideline.

NOW, TUNE YOUR EAR

Once you've begun to associate the pronunciation with how the word is written, practice pronouncing the vocabulary words at the end of the Welcome to Italy chapter (in *Italy: Instructions for Use*) according to the rules outlined here. Then, once in Italy, listen for these words and phrases as you go about your daily Italian life: at the bar, on the train, in

stores. They're little staples of the language that will help you integrate quickly, and give you your own opportunities to respond in a simple, but very Italian, way.

We won't specify the pronunciation of vocabulary words and complicated phrases in *Italy: Instructions for Use*, as we find it more important for newbies to pronounce fewer words well. You will find the syllable of emphasis with bold type

and along with some key phrases here to get started. Review them according to the keys we've provided and before you you'll have no need to even refer to them.

(Don't worry, these pronunciation hints are also contained in *ITALY: Instructions for Use*, so you'll have them along to refer to whenever you like.)



For everything else you'll need on-site during your Italian Adventure, here's what you'll find in the indispensable Italian operations manual, *ITALY: Instructions for Use**



You Know You're In Italy When...

Welcome to ITALY

Benvenuto In Italia

Hours of Operation
Times, Dates and Numbers
Giorno di Chiusura (Closing Day)
Economical Italy?
Dress Code
The Smoking Thing
The Strike: *Lo Sciopero*
La Dolce Vita

GETTING AROUND

By Car

or, Diesel is Not a Suggestion

Il Traffico
Types of Roads
Road Signs
Parking
Car Rental Reminders
Filling Up
Rules of the Italian Road

By Train

or, Leave the Driving to Them

Types of Trains
Which Class?
Ticketing & Reservations
The Train Station
The Train Schedule: Orario
Deposito Bagagli: Luggage Drop
Self-Service Ticketing: Two Types
All Aboard

Other Options

Regional Buses
Ferries and Boats
Air Travel within Italy
Lost Luggage

In Town

Local Bus Service
In the Metro
Taxis and Limousines
On Foot

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Phoning in Italy: He Who Calls, Pays.
Italian Phone Numbers, Call Costs,
Making International Calls,
Using Phone Cards, Pay Phones



Italy: Instructions for Use

Available from Amazon.com, bn.com, and any bookseller near you. For bulk sales, please contact Jacqueline Simonds at Beagle Bay, Inc., 775.827.8654 or by e-mail at sales@beaglebay.com

The Instructions are available through Ingram, Baker & Taylor, and all major distributors.

illustratpress.com

ISBN: 978-1885436-306

Internet Access
 The Internet Cafe
 Taking Your Laptop

MONEY

Or, Where there's a bank, there's a Bancomat

Currency Exchange
 The Euro
 Credit Cards
 Avoiding Trouble

EATING and DRINKING

or, The Most Important Thing is to Eat Well.

Types of Eateries
Aperitivo: The Italian Cocktail
 The Italian Meal
 Ordering
 The *Digestivo*
 La Pizza
Coperto, Servizio, Tax and Tipping
 It's Not Coffee, it's *Caffè*
 Gel-ahhhh-to

Lo SHOPPING

The *Tabaccaio*: Your One-Stop Sundry Shop
 The Newstand: *L'Edicole*
 The Bookstore: the *Libreria*
 Food Stores
 Other Types of Stores
 Local Markets

The Cash Discount: *Sconto*
 The VAT Refund

SHIPPING and the POST

PosteItaliane: Italian Postal Service
 Private Shipping Services

TOURIST INFORMATION

English Spoken Here

The TI Office
 Local Tour Guides and Private Tours

APPENDIX A to Z

Airline Companies; Intra-Europe; Airport Web Sites, Assistance and Emergency Phone Numbers; Bus and Metro Companies; Regional; Bus and Metro Companies; Urban; Car Rental Companies; Cell Phone Rental; Conversions/Comparisons; Currency Exchange Rate; Customs Information; Embassies and Consulates (U.S.); Ferry Companies; Guidebooks and Travel Resources; Holidays and Annual Events; Internet Points; Internet Service; Language Instruction; Maps & Driving; Money; Passport Information; Recommended Films; Recommended Reading, Shipping Services; Tax (VAT) Refunds; Time, Date and Number Formats; Train/Rail Pass Sample Fare Comparison; Train Schedule Information; Travel Insurance Companies; Travel Time and Cost Est.

Vocabulary (English to Italian)

Index

** when all else fails, read the instructions!*