

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in Italy can range from the sublime to the ridiculous with prices to match. Hotels and *pensioni* (guesthouses) make up the bulk of accommodation, covering a rainbow of options from cheap, nasty and ill-lit dosshouses near stations to luxury hotels considered among the best on the planet. Youth hostels and camping grounds are scattered across the country. Other options include charming B&B-style places that continue to proliferate, villa and apartment rentals, and *agriturismo* (farm stays). Some of the latter are working farms, others converted farmhouses (often with pool). Mountain walkers will find *rifugi* (alpine huts) handy, and it is possible to stay overnight in some of Italy's many monasteries. An original option born in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region is

the *albergo diffuso* (p409). In several villages, various apartments and houses are rented to guests through a centralised hotel-style reception in the village.

In this book a range of prices are quoted from low to high season and are intended as a guide only. Hotels are listed according to three categories (budget, midrange and top end). Half-board equals breakfast and either lunch or dinner; full board includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Prices can fluctuate enormously depending on the season, with Easter, summer and the Christmas/New Year period being the typical peak tourist times. Expect to pay top prices in the mountains during the ski season (December to March). There are many variables. Summer is high season on the coast but in the parched cities can equal low season. In August especially many city hotels charge as little as half price. It is always worth considering booking ahead in high season (although in the urban centres you can usually find something if you trust to luck).

As a rough guide, a budget double room can cost up to €80, a midrange one from €80 to €200 and top-end anything from there to thousands of euros for a suite in one of the country's premier establishments. Price depends greatly on where you're looking. A bottom-end budget choice in Venice or Milan will set you back the price of a decent midrange option in, say, Campania. Where possible and appropriate, we have presented prices with the maximum low- and high-season rates thus: s €40-60, d €80-130, meaning that a single might cost €40 at most in low season and a double €130 at most in high season.

Some hotels barely alter their prices throughout the year. This is especially true of the lower-end places, although in low season there is no harm in trying to bargain for a discount. You may find hoteliers especially receptive if you intend to stay for several days.

For more on costs, see p19.

To make a reservation, hotels usually require confirmation by fax or, more commonly, a credit card number. In the latter case, if you don't show up you will be docked a night's accommodation.

PRACTICALITIES

- Use the metric system for weights and measures.
- Plugs have two or three round pins. The electric current is 220V, 50Hz, but older buildings may still use 125V.
- If your Italian's up to it, try the following newspapers: *Corriere della Sera*, the country's leading daily; *Il Messaggero*, a popular Rome-based broadsheet; *L'Unità*, the former left-wing mouthpiece; or *La Repubblica*, a centre-left daily with a flow of Mafia conspiracies and Vatican scoops. For the Church's view, try the *Osservatore Romano*.
- Tune into Vatican Radio (www.radiovaticana.org; 93.3 FM and 105 FM in the Rome area) for a run-down on what the pope is up to (in Italian, English and other languages); or state-owned Italian RAI-1, RAI-2 and RAI-3 (www.rai.it), which broadcast all over the country and abroad. Commercial stations such as Rome's Radio Centro Suono (www.radiocentrosuono.it) and Radio Città Futura (www.radiocittafutura.it), Naples' Radio Kiss Kiss (www.kisskissnapoli.it) and Milan-based leftwing Radio Popolare (www.radiopopolare.it) are all good for contemporary music.
- Switch on the box to watch the state-run RAI-1, RAI-2 and RAI-3 (www.rai.it) and the main commercial stations (mostly run by Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset company): Canale 5 (www.canale5.mediaset.it), Italia 1 (www.italia1.mediaset.it), Rete 4 (www.rete4.mediaset.it) and La 7 (www.la7.it).

Agriturismo & B&Bs

Holidays on working farms, or *agriturismi*, are increasingly popular, both with travellers and property owners looking for extra revenue. Accommodation can range from simple, rustic affairs to luxury locations where little farming is done and the swimming pool sparkles. *Agriturismo* business booms in Tuscany and Umbria, but is also steadily gaining ground in other regions. Local tourist offices can usually supply lists of operators. For detailed information on *agriturismo* facilities throughout Italy check out **Agriturist** (www.agriturist.com) and **Agriturismo.com** (www.agriturismo.com). Other sites include **Network Agriturismo Italia 2005** (www.agriturismo-italia2005.com), which in spite of its name is updated annually, **Agriturismo-Italia.Net** (www.agriturismo-italia.net), **Agriturismoitalia.com** (www.agriturismoitalia.com) and **Agriturismo Vero** (www.agriturismovero.com).

B&B options include everything from restored farmhouses, city *palazzi* and seaside bungalows to rooms in family houses. Tariffs per person cover a wide range from around €25 to €75. For more information, contact **Bed & Breakfast Italia** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 06 687 86 18; www.bbitalia.it; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 282, 00186 Rome).

Camping

Most camping grounds in Italy are major complexes with swimming pools, restaurants and supermarkets. They are graded according

to a star system. Charges often vary according to the season, rising to a peak in July and August. Such high-season prices range from €2 to €20 per adult, free to €12 for children under 12, and from €5 to €25 for a site. In the major cities, grounds are often a long way from the historic centres. Many camping grounds offer the alternative of bungalows or even simple, self-contained flats.

Independent camping is not permitted in protected areas but, out of the main tourist season, independent campers who choose spots that aren't visible from the road and who don't light fires shouldn't have too much trouble. Get permission from the landowner if you want to camp on private property.

Lists of camping grounds are available from local tourist offices or can be looked up on various sites including www.campeggi.com, www.camping.it and www.italcamping.it. The Touring Club Italiano (TCI) publishes the annual *Campeggi in Italia* (Camping in Italy), listing all camping grounds, and the Istituto Geografico de Agostini publishes *Guida ai Campeggi in Europa* (Guide to Camping in Europe), sold together with *Guida ai Campeggi in Italia*. Both are available in major bookshops.

Other sites worth looking up are www.canvasholidays.com, www.eurocamp.co.uk, www.keycamp.co.uk and www.select-site.com (on this site it's possible to make individual site bookings).

Convents & Monasteries

What about a night or two in monastic peace? Some convents and monasteries let out cells or rooms as a modest revenue-making exercise and happily take in tourists, while others are single sex and only take in pilgrims or people who are on a spiritual retreat. Many do not take in guests at all. Convents and monasteries generally impose a fairly early curfew. Charges hover around €35/70/100 for a single/double/triple.

As a starting point, take a look at the website of the **Chiesa di Santa Susana** (www.santasusanna.org/comingToRome/convents.html), an American Catholic church in Rome. On this site, it has searched out convent and monastery accommodation options around the country. Getting a spot is generally up to you contacting the individual institution – there are no central booking agencies for convents and monasteries (yet!). Note that some places are just residential accommodation run by religious orders and not necessarily big on monastic atmosphere.

Another site worth a look is www.initaly.com/agri/convents.htm, for options in Abruzzo, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily, Tuscany, Umbria and the Veneto. You pay US\$6 to access the online newsletter with addresses. At www.realrome.com/accommconvents.html you will find a list of Roman convents that generally take in young single women. **Dolce Vita Travel** (www.dolcevita.com/travel) lists a top 10 of convents and monasteries in Italy. A useful if ageing publication is Eileen Barish's *The Guide to Lodging in Italy's Monasteries*. Another is *Guida ai Monasteri d'Italia*, by Gian Maria Grasselli and Pietro Tarallo. It details hundreds of monasteries, including many that provide lodging.

Hostels

Ostelli per la Gioventù (youth hostels) are run by the **Associazione Italiana Alberghi per la Gioventù** (AIG; Map p102; ☎ 06 487 11 52; www.ostellionline.org; Via Cavour 44, Rome), affiliated to **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com). A valid HI card is required in all associated youth hostels in Italy. You can get this in your home country or direct at many hostels.

Pick up a booklet on Italian hostels, with details of prices, locations and so on, from the national head office of AIG. Nightly rates vary from around €14 to €20, which usually

includes a buffet breakfast. You can often get lunch or dinner for €9.50.

Accommodation is in segregated dormitories and it can be basic, although many hostels offer doubles and/or family rooms (usually at a higher price per person). Hostels will sometimes have a lock-out period between about 9am and 1.30pm. Check-in is usually not before 1pm and in many hostels there is a curfew from around 11pm. It is usually necessary to pay before 9am on the day of departure.

A small but growing contingent of independent hostels offers alternatives to HI hostels. Many are barely distinguishable from budget hotels. One of many hostel websites is www.hostelworld.com.

Hotels & Pensioni

There is often little difference between a *pensione* and an *albergo* (hotel). However, a *pensione* will generally be of one- to three-star quality and traditionally it has been a family-run operation, while an *albergo* can be awarded up to five stars. *Locande* (inns) long fell into much the same category as *pensioni*, but the term has become a trendy one in some parts and reveals little about the quality of a place. *Affittacamere* are rooms for rent in private houses. They are generally simple affairs.

Quality can vary enormously and the official star system gives only limited clues. One-star hotels/*pensioni* tend to be basic and usually do not offer private bathrooms. Two-star places are similar but rooms will generally have a private bathroom. At three-star joints you can usually assume reasonable standards. Four- and five-star hotels offer facilities such as room service, laundry and dry-cleaning.

Prices are highest in major tourist destinations. They also tend to be higher in northern Italy. A *camera singola* (single room) costs from €25. A *camera doppia* (twin beds) or

camera matrimoniale (double room with a double bed) will cost from around €40.

Tourist offices usually have booklets with local accommodation listings. Many hotels are also signing up with (steadily proliferating) online accommodation-booking services. You could start your search here:

Alberghi in Italia (www.alberghi-in-italia.it)

All Hotels in Italy (www.hotelsitalyonline.com)

Hotels web.it (www.hotelsweb.it)

In Italia (www.initalia.it)

Italy Hotels Discount (www.italy-hotels-discount.com)

Travel to Italy (www.travel-to-italy.com)

Mountain Huts

The network of *rifugi* in the Alps, Apennines and other mountains in Italy are usually only open from July to September. Accommodation is generally in dormitories but some of the larger refuges have doubles. The price per person (which usually includes breakfast) ranges from €17 to €26 depending on the quality of the refuge (it's more for a double room). A hearty postwalk single-dish dinner will set you back another €11.50.

Rifugi are marked on good walking maps. Some are close to chair lifts and cable-car stations, which means they are usually expensive and crowded. Others are at high altitude and involve hours of hard walking. It is important to book in advance. Additional information can be obtained from the local tourist offices.

The **Club Alpino Italiano** (CAI; www.cai.it in Italian) owns and runs many of the mountain huts. Members of organisations such as the Australian Alpine Club and British Mountaineering Council can enjoy discounted rates for accommodation and meals by obtaining a reciprocal rights card (for a fee).

Rental Accommodation

Finding rental accommodation in the major cities can be difficult and time-consuming – rental agencies (local and foreign) can assist, for a fee. Rental rates are higher for short-term leases. A small apartment or a studio anywhere near the centre of Rome will cost around €1000 per month and it is usually necessary to pay a deposit (generally one month in advance). Expect to spend similar amounts in cities such as Florence, Milan, Naples and Venice. Apartments and villas for rent are listed in local publications such as Rome's weekly *Porta Portese* and the fort-

nightly *Wanted in Rome*. Another option is to answer an advertisement in a local publication to share an apartment. If you are staying for a few months and don't mind sharing, check out university noticeboards for student flats with vacant rooms.

If you're looking for an apartment or studio to rent for a short stay (such as a week or two) the easiest option is to check out the websites of agencies dealing in this kind of thing:

Guest in Italy (www.guestinitaly.com) An online agency, with apartments (mostly for two to four people) ranging from about €115 to €385 a night.

Holiday Lettings (www.holidaylettings.co.uk) Has hundreds of apartments all over the country.

Interhome (www.interhome.co.uk) Here you book apartments for blocks of a week, starting at around UK£400 for two people in Rome.

In major resort areas, such as popular coastal areas in summer and the ski towns in winter, the tourist offices have lists of apartments and villas for rent.

Villa Rentals

Long the preserve of the Tuscan sun, the villa rental scene in Italy has taken off in recent years, with agencies offering villa accommodation, often in splendid rural locations not far from enchanting medieval towns or Mediterranean beaches, up and down the country. More eccentric options include renting *trulli*, the conical traditional houses of southern Puglia or *dammusi* (houses with thick, white-washed walls and a shallow cupola), on the island of Pantelleria, south of Sicily. You can start your search with the following agencies but there are dozens of operators.

For villas in the time-honoured and most popular central regions, particularly Tuscany and Umbria, check out the following:

Cuendet (www.cuendet.com) One of the old hands in this business; operates from the heart of Siena province in Tuscany.

Ilios Travel (www.iliostavel.com) UK-based company with villas, apartments and castles in Venice, Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, Le Marche, Abruzzo and Sardinia.

Invitation to Tuscany (www.invitationtotuscany.com) A wide range of properties across Tuscany.

Italian Retreats (www.italianretreats.com) Properties from Tuscany to Campania and a sprinkling in Venice.

Simpson (www.simpson-travel.com) Concentrates on Tuscany, Umbria and Sicily.

Summer's Leases (www.summerleases.com) Properties in Tuscany and Umbria.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Some agencies concentrate their energies on the south (especially Campania and Puglia) and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia:

Costa Smeralda Holidays (www.costasmeralda-holidays.com) Concentrates on Sardinia's northeast.

Long Travel (www.long-travel.co.uk) From Lazio and Abruzzo south, including Sardinia and Sicily.

Think Sicily (www.thinksicily.com) Strictly Sicilian properties.

Voyages Ilena (www.voyagesilena.co.uk) For Sardinia and Sicily.

Operators offering villas and other short-term let properties across the country:

Carefree Italy (www.carefree-italy.com) Apartments and villas.

Cottages & Castles (www.cottagesandcastles.com.au) An Australian-based specialist in villa-style accommodation in Italy.

Cottages to Castles (www.cottagestocastles.com) UK-based operator with properties across the country and agents worldwide.

Parker Villas (www.parkervillas.co.uk) Has properties all over Italy.

Veronica Tomasso Cotgrove (www.vtitaly.com) This London-based company also acts in the sale of property in Tuscany and Umbria.

BUSINESS HOURS

Generally shops open from 9am to 1pm and 3.30pm to 7.30pm (or 4pm to 8pm) Monday to Saturday. Many close on Saturday afternoon and some close on a Monday morning or afternoon, and sometimes again on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon. In major towns most department stores and supermarkets have continuous opening hours from 10am to 7.30pm Monday to Saturday. Some even open from 9am to 1pm on Sunday.

Banks tend to open from 8.30am to 1.30pm and 3.30pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. They close at weekends but exchange offices usually remain open in the larger cities and in major tourist areas.

Central post offices open from 8.30am to 6.30pm from Monday to Saturday. Some main branches close at 12.30pm on Saturday, while most smaller branches only open Monday to Friday. All close two hours earlier than normal on the last business day of each month (not including Saturday).

Farmacie (pharmacies) are generally open 9am to 12.30pm and 3.30pm to 7.30pm. Most shut on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and holidays but a handful remain open on a rota-

tion basis for emergency purposes. Closed pharmacies display a list of the nearest ones open.

Many bars and cafés open from about 8am to 8pm. Others then go on into the night serving a nocturnal crowd while still others, dedicated more exclusively to nocturnal diversion, don't get started until the early evening (even if they officially open in the morning). Few bars remain open anywhere beyond 1am or 2am. Clubs (*discoteche*) might open around 10pm (or earlier if they have eateries on the premises) but things don't get seriously shaking until after midnight.

Restaurants open noon to 3pm and 7.30pm to around 11pm or midnight (sometimes even later in summer and in the south), although the kitchen often shuts an hour earlier than final closing time. Most restaurants and bars close at least one day a week.

The opening hours of museums, galleries and archaeological sites vary enormously, although at the more important sites there is a trend towards continuous opening from around 9.30am to 7pm. Many close on Monday. Some of the major national museums and galleries remain open until 10pm in summer. See p864 for the opening hours of tourist offices.

CHILDREN Practicalities

Italians love children but there are few special amenities for them. Always make a point of asking staff at tourist offices if they know of any special family activities or have suggestions on hotels that cater for kids. Discounts are available for children (usually aged under 12 but sometimes based on the child's height) on public transport and for admission to sites.

If you have kids, book accommodation in advance to avoid any inconvenience and, when travelling by train, reserve seats where possible to avoid finding yourselves standing. You can hire car seats for infants and children from most car-rental firms, but you should always book them in advance.

You can buy baby formula in powder or liquid form, as well as sterilising solutions such as Milton, at pharmacies. Disposable nappies (diapers) are widely available at supermarkets and pharmacies. Fresh cow's milk is sold in cartons in supermarkets and in bars that have a 'Latteria' sign. UHT milk is popular and

in many out-of-the-way areas the only kind available. For info on eating out with children, see p859.

Sights & Activities

Successful travel with children can require a special effort. Don't try to overdo things and make sure activities include the kids – older children could help in the planning of these. Try to think of things that might capture their imagination like the sites at Pompeii (p654), the Colosseum (p107) and the Forum (p109) in Rome, and Greek temples in the south and on Sicily. Another good bet are the volcanoes in the south.

Water activities, from lolling on a beach to snorkelling or sailing, are always winners.

When choosing museums, throw in the odd curio that may be more likely to stir a young child's fascination than yet another worthy art gallery! Boys will probably like such things as Venice's Museo Storico Navale (p354), while girls might enjoy the idea of a little fashion shopping with Mum in Milan's Golden Quad (p268) district. In northern Italy, make a stopover at Gardaland (p299), the amusement park near Lago di Garda in Lombardy, or at Italia in Miniatura (p455) in Emilia-Romagna.

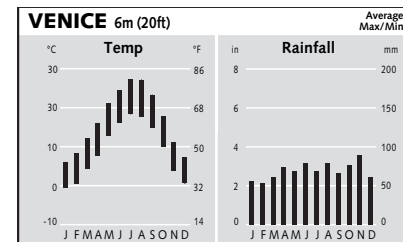
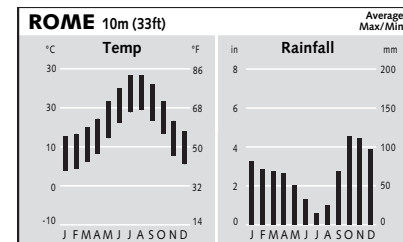
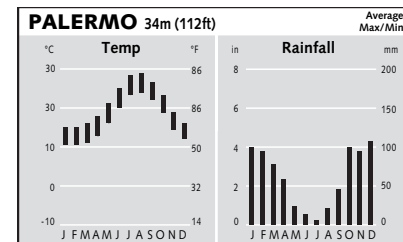
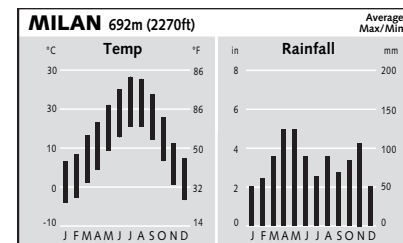
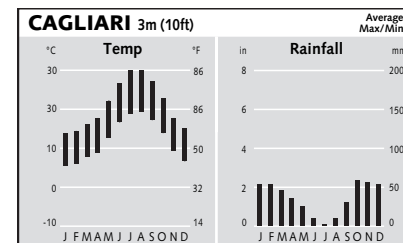
Always allow time for kids to play, and make sure treats such as a whopping gelato or slice of their favourite pizza are included in the bag of tricks.

See also Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* or the websites www.travelwithyourkids.com and www.familytravelnetwork.com.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Situated in the temperate zone and jutting deep into the Mediterranean, Italy is regarded by many tourists as a land of sunny, mild weather. However, due to the north-south orientation of the peninsula and the fact that it is largely mountainous, the country's climate is variable. See p19 for more information on when to go.

In the Alps, temperatures are lower and winters can be long and severe. Generally the weather is warm from July to September, although rainfall can be high in September. While the first snowfall is usually in November, light snow sometimes falls in mid-September and heavy falls can occur in early October. Freak snowfalls in June are not unknown at high altitudes. Mind you, with



climate change, many ski resorts can remain distressingly snow-free until early January.

The Alps shield northern Lombardy and the Lakes area, including Milan, from the extremes of the northern European winter, and Liguria enjoys a mild, Mediterranean climate similar to that in southern Italy because it is protected by the Alps and Apennine range.

Winters are severe and summers torrid in the Po valley. Venice can be hot and humid in summer and, although not too cold in winter, it can be unpleasant if wet or when the sea level rises and *acqua alte* (literally 'high waters') inundate the city. This is most likely in November and December. Along the Po valley and in Venice especially, January and February can be surprisingly crisp and stunning.

In Florence, encircled by hills, the weather can be quite extreme but, as you travel towards the tip of the boot, temperatures and weather conditions become milder. Rome, for instance, has an average July and August temperature in the mid-20s (Celsius), although the impact of the *sirocco* (a hot, humid wind blowing from Africa) can produce stiflingly hot weather in August, with temperatures in the high 30s for days on end. Winters are moderate and snow is rare in Rome, although winter clothing (or at least a heavy overcoat) is still a requirement.

The south of Italy and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia have a Mediterranean climate. Summers are long, hot and dry, and winter temperatures tend to be relatively moderate, with daytime averages not too far below 10°C. These regions are also affected by the humid *sirocco* in summer.

COURSES

Holiday courses are a booming section of the Italian tourist industry and they cover everything from painting, art, sculpture, wine, food, photography and scuba diving to even hang-gliding. You will find details on various local courses throughout this book. US students looking to sign up for courses in Italy might want to check out the offerings at **Study Abroad Italy** (www.studyabroaditaly.com).

Cooking

Many people come to Italy just for the food so it is hardly surprising that cookery courses are among the most popular. Check out Mama Margaret's website (www.italycookingsschools.com) for ideas on courses throughout the

country; see also p75 for details on specific courses.

Language

Courses are run by private schools and universities throughout the country and are a great way to learn Italian while enjoying the opportunity to live in an Italian city or town. Among the more popular and reasonably priced options, are the **Università per Stranieri di Perugia** (www.unistrapg.it) and the **Università per Stranieri di Siena** (www.unistrasi.it), both set in beautiful medieval cities. Frequently these schools offer extracurricular or full-time courses in painting, art history, sculpture and architecture, too. One school most praised by Lonely Planet readers is **Saenaiulia** (☎ 0577 441 55; www.saenaiulia.it) in Siena. Florence (p478) and Rome (p135) are teeming with Italian-language schools, while Venice (p357) has hardly any.

The Istituto Italiano di Cultura (IIC), which has branches all over the world, is a government-sponsored organisation aimed at promoting Italian culture and language. This is a good place to start your search for places to study in Italy. The institute has branches all over the world, including in Australia (Sydney), Canada (Montreal), the UK (London) and the USA (Los Angeles, New York and Washington). The website of the **Italian foreign ministry** (www.esteri.it) has a full list of institutions; click on Diplomatic Representations and then on Italian Cultural Institutes.

Painting

Art and painting courses abound, especially in Florence. One place to start looking is at **Learn4good** (www.learn4good.com), which has information on several art schools in Italy. **It-Schools.com** (www.it-schools.com) is also worth checking out.

Yoga

It will always be hard to close your senses to the food and drink of Italy, but another way to enjoy the country is with a little gentle body-work. **Yoga in Italy** (☎ 0445 48 02 98; www.yogainitaly.it) offers a variety of week-long holidays combining yoga with anything from walks in the Chianti countryside to white-water rafting.

CUSTOMS

Duty-free sales within the EU no longer exist (but goods are sold tax-free in European airports). Visitors coming into Italy from non-

EU countries can import, duty free: 1L of spirits (or 2L wine), 50g perfume, 250mL eau de toilette, 200 cigarettes and other goods up to a total of €175; anything over this limit must be declared on arrival and the appropriate duty paid. On leaving the EU, non-EU citizens can reclaim any Value Added Tax (VAT) on expensive purchases (see p862).

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

It sometimes requires patience to deal with the Italian concept of service, which does not always seem to follow the maxim that the customer is always right. While often courteous and friendly, some people in uniform or behind a counter (including police officers, waiters and shop assistants) may regard you with supreme indifference.

Long queues are the norm in banks, post offices and government offices.

Pollution

Noise and air pollution are problems in the major cities, caused mainly by heavy traffic. A headache after a day of sightseeing in Rome or Milan is likely to be caused by breathing in carbon monoxide and lead, rather than simple tiredness.

In summer (and occasionally other seasons) pollution alerts come as a wake-up call in cities like Rome, Milan, Naples and Florence. The elderly, children and people with respiratory problems are warned to stay indoors. If you fit into one of these categories, keep yourself informed through the tourist office or your hotel. Often traffic is cut by half during these alerts by obliging drivers with odd and even number plates to drive on alternate days.

Watch where you step as dog poop on the pavements is a big city irritation. Italian dog-owners are catching onto the idea of cleaning up their best friend's daily doings, but this is by no means a universal courtesy.

Italy's beaches can be polluted by industrial waste, sewage and oil spills from the Mediterranean's considerable sea traffic. The best and cleanest beaches are on Sardinia, Sicily, less-populated southern areas of the mainland and Elba.

Smoking

Since early 2005 smoking in all closed public spaces (from bars to elevators, offices to trains) has been banned – and believe it or not, the ban is being enforced.

Theft

Pickpockets and bag-snatchers operate in most cities, especially Naples and Rome. Reduce the chances of such petty theft by wearing a money belt (with money, passport, credit cards and important documents) *under* your clothing. Wear bags or cameras slung across the body to make it harder to snatch them. If your hotel has a safe, use it.

Watch for groups of dishevelled-looking women and children asking you for money. Their favourite haunts are train stations, tourist sights and shopping areas. If you've been targeted by a group take evasive action (such as crossing the street) or shout '*Va via!*' (Go away!). Again, this is an issue mainly in Rome and Naples.

Parked cars, particularly those with foreign number plates or rental-company stickers, are prime targets. Try not to leave anything in the car and certainly not overnight. Car theft is a problem in Rome, Campania and Puglia.

In case of theft or loss, always report the incident at the police station within 24 hours and ask for a statement, otherwise your travel-insurance company won't pay out.

Traffic

Italian traffic can at best be described as chaotic, although it has improved a trifle now that Italian drivers have point-system licences. Drivers are not keen to stop for pedestrians, even at pedestrian crossings, and are more likely to swerve. Where this is the case, follow the locals (even if they seem to be bent on suicide) by marching out into the (swerving) traffic.

Confusingly, in some cities, roads that appear to be only for one-way traffic have lanes for buses travelling in the opposite direction – always look both ways before stepping onto the road.

Sign posting is often confusing. It is not uncommon to see signs to the same place pointing in two opposing directions at once. This can be especially unnerving for drivers navigating their way out of a city for the first time (although one becomes accustomed to these 'options' after a while).

City driving can be nerve-wracking, with what seems a cavalier dodgem-cars element to it. Motorcyclists should be prepared for anything in the cities. Once you get the hang of Italian-style urban driving, though, you might come to like it!

DISCOUNT CARDS

At museums and galleries, never hesitate to enquire after discounts for students, young people, children, families or the elderly. When sightseeing and wherever possible buy a *biglietto cumulativo*, a ticket that allows admission to a number of associated sights for less than the combined cost of separate admission fees.

Senior Cards

Senior citizens are often entitled to public transport discounts but usually only for monthly passes (not daily or weekly tickets); the minimum qualifying age is 65 years.

Seniors (over 60) travelling by rail can get a 15% reduction on all fares by purchasing the annual Cartaviaggio Relax card (€30). Indeed, anyone can get this card for free (for other minor benefits). The extra payment is for seniors only (although those over 75 are exempt from paying) and made specifically for the discounted travel. The card is available at train stations.

Admission to most museums in Rome is free for over-60s but in other cities (such as Florence) often no concessions are made for nonresidents. In numerous places, EU seniors have free entry to sights. Always ask.

Student & Youth Cards

Free admission to some galleries and sites is available to under-18s. Discounts (usually half the normal fee) are available for some sights to EU citizens aged between 18 and 25. An **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC; www.isic.org) is no longer sufficient at many tourist sites as prices are usually based on age so a passport, driver's licence or **Euro<26** (www.euro26.org) card is preferable.

An ISIC card may still, however, prove useful for cheap transport, theatre and cinema discounts, as well as occasional discounts in some hotels and restaurants (check the lists on the ISIC website); similar cards are available to teachers (International Teacher Identity Card, or ITIC). For nonstudent travellers under 25, the International Youth Travel Card (IYTC) offers the same benefits.

Student cards are issued by student unions, hostelling organisations as well as some youth travel agencies. In Italy, the **Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile** (CTS; www.cts.it) youth travel agency can issue ISIC, ITIC and Euro<26 cards.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

For foreign embassies and consulates in Italy not listed here, look under 'Ambasciate' or 'Consolati' in the telephone directory. In addition to the following, some countries run honorary consulates in other cities.

Australia Rome (Map p91; ☎ 06 85 27 21, emergencies 800 877 790; www.italy.embassy.gov.au; Via Antonio Bosio 5, 00161; Milan (Map pp256-7; ☎ 02 777 04 217; www.austrade.it; Via Borgogna 2, 20122)

Austria (Map pp92-3; ☎ 06 844 01 41; www.bmaa.gv.at; Via Pergolesi 3, Rome, 00198)

Canada (Map p91; ☎ 06 44 59 81; www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadaeuropa/italy; Via Zara 30, Rome, 00198)

France Rome (Map pp96-7; ☎ 06 68 60 11; www.france-italia.it; Piazza Farnese 67, 00186); Milan (Map pp256-7; ☎ 02 655 91 41; Via della Moscova 12, 20121); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 598 07 11; Via Francesco Crispi 86, 80121); Venice (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 43 19; Palazzo Morosini, Castello 6140, 30123)

Germany Rome (Map p102; ☎ 06 49 21 31; www.rom.diplo.de; Via San Martino della Battaglia 4, 00185); Milan (Map pp256-7; ☎ 02 623 11 01; www.mailand.diplo.de; Via Solferino 40, 20121); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 248 85 11; www.neapel.diplo.de; Via Francesco Crispi 69, 80121)

Ireland (Map pp96-7; ☎ 06 697 91 21; www.ambasciata-irlanda.it; Piazza Campitelli 3, Rome, 00186)

Japan Rome (Map p102; ☎ 06 48 79 91; www.it.emb-japan.go.jp; Via Quintino Sella 60, 00187); Milan (☎ 02 624 11 41; Via privata Cesare Mangili 2/4, 20121)

Netherlands Rome (Map pp92-3; ☎ 06 322 86 002; www.olanda.it; Via Michele Mercati 8, 00197); Milan (☎ 02 485 58 41; Via San Vittore 45, 20123); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 551 30 03; Via Agostino Depretis 114, 80133); Palermo (Map p742; ☎ 091 58 15 21; Via Enrico Amari 8, 90139)

New Zealand Rome (Map p91; ☎ 06 441 71 71; www.nzembassy.com; Via Zara 28, 00198); Milan (pp254-5; ☎ 02 499 02 01; Via Guido d'Arezzo 6, 20145)

Switzerland Rome (Map p91; ☎ 06 80 95 71; www.eda.admin.ch/roma; Via Barnarba Oriani 61, 00197); Milan (☎ 02 777 91 61; www.eda.admin.ch/milano; Via Palestro 2, 20121); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 410 70 46; www.eda.admin.ch/napoli; Via dei Mille 16, 80121)

UK Rome (Map p91; ☎ 06 422 00 001; www.britishembassy.gov.uk; Via XX Settembre 80a, 00187); Florence (Map p470; ☎ 055 28 41 33; Lungarno Corsini 2, 50123); Milan (pp256-7; ☎ 02 72 30 01; Via San Paolo 7, 20121); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 423 89 11; Via dei Mille 40, 80121)

USA Rome (Map pp96-7; ☎ 06 4 67 41; www.usis.it; Via Vittorio Veneto 119a, 00187); Florence (Map pp464-5; ☎ 055 26 69 51; Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci 38, 50123); Milan (pp256-7; ☎ 02 29 03 51; Via Principe Amedeo 2/10, 20121); Naples (Map pp620-1; ☎ 081 583 81 11; Piazza della Repubblica, 80122)

FOOD & DRINK

Restaurant listings in this book are given in order of cheapest to most expensive, going by the price of a meal, unless otherwise stated. A meal in this guide consists of a *primo* (first course), a *secondo* (second course), a dessert and a glass of house wine. The budget category is for meals costing up to €20, midrange is €20 to €50 and top end is anything over €50. These figures represent a halfway point between the expensive cities such as Milan and Venice and the considerably cheaper towns across the south. Indeed, a restaurant rated as midrange in one place might be considered cheap as chips in Milan. It is best to check the menu, usually posted by the entrance, for prices. Most eating establishments have a cover charge (called *coperto*; usually from around €1 to €2) and a *servizio* (service charge) of 10% to 15%.

A tavola calda (literally 'hot table') normally offers cheap, pre-prepared food and can include self-service pasta, roast meats and *pizza al taglio*.

A trattoria is traditionally a cheaper, often family-run version of a *ristorante* (restaurant) with less-alooof service and simpler dishes. An *osteria* is likely to be either a wine bar offering a small selection of dishes with a verbal menu, or a small trattoria. You can sometimes get food to accompany your tipples in an *enoteca* (wine bar).

Bars are popular hang-outs, serving mostly coffee, soft drinks and alcohol. They often sell brioche (breakfast pastry), *cornetti* (croissants), *panini* (bread rolls with simple fillings) and *spuntini* (snacks) to have with your drink.

You'll find vegetarian and vegan restaurants in larger cities, such as Rome and Milan. Otherwise vegans can have a tough time. Many Italians seem to think cheese is vegetarian, so make sure your dish is '*senza formaggio*' (without cheese). The good news is that most places usually do some good vegetable starters and side dishes.

Children's menus are uncommon but you can generally ask for a *mezzo piatto* (half plate) off the menu. Kids are generally welcome in most restaurants but do not count on the availability of high chairs.

For an introduction to the famous Italian cuisine and wines, see p70 and p437. For information on the opening hours of restaurants, see p854.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Italy and well tolerated in the major cities. However, overt displays of affection by homosexual couples could attract a negative response in the more conservative south and smaller towns. The legal age of consent is generally 16 (there are some exceptions where people below that age are concerned, in which case it can drop to as low as 13). A few years ago the gay capitals of Italy were Milan and Bologna, but Rome is now giving both cities some strong competition.

There are gay clubs in Rome, Milan and Bologna, and a handful in places such as Florence. Some coastal towns and resorts (such as the Tuscan town of Viareggio or Taormina in Sicily) have much more action in summer. For clues, track down local gay organisations or publications such as *Pride*, a national monthly magazine, and *AUT* published by **Circolo Mario Mieli** (www.mariomieli.org) in Rome. The useful website www.gay.com (in Italian) lists gay bars and hotels across the country. **Arcigay & Arcilesbica** (☎ 051 649 30 55; www.arcigay.it; Via Don Minzoni 18, Bologna), is a worthy national organisation for gay men and lesbians.

HOLIDAYS

Most Italians take their annual holiday in August. This means that many businesses and shops close for at least a part of that month. The *Settimana Santa* (Easter Week) is another busy holiday period for Italians.

Individual towns have public holidays to celebrate the feasts of their patron saints (see p24). National public holidays include the following:

New Year's Day (Capodanno or Anno Nuovo) 1 January

Epiphany (Epifania or Befana) 6 January

Easter Monday (Pasquetta or Lunedì dell'Angelo)

March/April

Liberation Day (Giorno della Liberazione) 25 April –

marks the Allied Victory in Italy, and the end of the German presence and Mussolini, in 1945

Labour Day (Festa del Lavoro) 1 May

Republic Day (Festa della Repubblica) 2 June

Feast of the Assumption (Assunzione or Ferragosto)

15 August

All Saints' Day (Ognissanti) 1 November

Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Immacolata Concezione) 8 December

Christmas Day (Natale) 25 December

Boxing Day (Festa di Santo Stefano) 26 December

INSURANCE

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. It may also cover you for cancellation or delays to your travel arrangements. Paying for your ticket with a credit card can often provide limited travel accident insurance and you may be able to reclaim the payment if the operator doesn't deliver. Ask your credit-card company what it will cover.

For information on health insurance, see p881.

INTERNET ACCESS

If you plan to carry your notebook or palm-top computer with you, carry a universal AC adaptor for your appliance (most are sold with these). Do not rely on finding wi-fi whenever you want it, as hot spots remain few and far between and often require payment. Another option is to buy a PCMCIA card pack with one of the Italian mobile phone operators, which gives wireless access through the mobile telephone network. These are usually pre-pay services that you can top up as you go.

Most travellers make constant use of internet cafés and free web-based email such as Yahoo, Hotmail or Gmail. Internet cafés and centres are present, if not always abundant, in all cities and most main towns (don't forget your incoming mail server name, account name and password). Prices hover at around the €5 to €8 mark per hour. For some useful internet addresses, see p20.

LEGAL MATTERS

For many Italians, finding ways to get around the law is a way of life. This is partly because bureaucracy has long been seen by most (with some justification) as a suffocating clamp on just about all areas of human activity.

The average tourist will only have a brush with the law if robbed by a bag-snatcher or pickpocket.

Alcohol & Drugs

Italy's drug laws were toughened in 2006 and possession of any controlled substances, including cannabis or marijuana, can get you into hot water. Those caught in possession of five grams of cannabis can be considered traffickers and prosecuted as such. The same applies to tiny amounts of other drugs. Those caught with amounts below this threshold can be subject to minor penalties. The centre-left

LEGAL AGE

- The right to vote: 18 years old
- Age of consent: 16 years old (both heterosexual and homosexual, but there are some exceptions to the general rules)
- Driving: 18 years old

coalition government that came to power in April 2006 has vowed to repeal these tough laws.

The legal limit for blood-alcohol level is 0.05% and random breath tests do occur.

Police

If you run into trouble in Italy, you are likely to end up dealing with the *polizia statale* (state police) or the *carabinieri* (military police).

The *polizia* take their orders from the Ministry of the Interior and deal with thefts, visa extensions and permits (among other things). They wear powder-blue trousers with a fuchsia stripe and a navy-blue jacket. Details of police stations, or *questure*, are given throughout this book.

The *carabinieri*, who are directed by the Ministry of Defence, are more concerned with civil obedience. They deal with general crime, public order and drug enforcement (often overlapping with the *polizia*). They wear a black uniform with a red stripe and drive night-blue cars with a red stripe. They are based in a *caserma* (barracks), a reflection of their past military status (they came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence).

One of the big differences between the police and *carabinieri* is the latter's reach – even many villages have a *carabinieri* post.

Other police include the *vigili urbani*, basically local traffic police. You will have to deal with them if you get a parking ticket or your car is towed away. The *guardia di finanza* are responsible for fighting tax evasion and drug smuggling. The *guardia forestale*, aka *corpo forestale*, are responsible for enforcing laws concerning forests and the environment in general.

For national emergency numbers, see the inside front cover.

Your Rights

Italy still has antiterrorism laws on its books that could make life difficult if you are de-

tained. You should be given verbal and written notice of the charges laid against you within 24 hours by arresting officers. You have no right to a phone call upon arrest. The prosecutor must apply to a magistrate for you to be held in preventive custody awaiting trial (depending on the seriousness of the offence) within 48 hours of arrest. You have the right not to respond to questions without the presence of a lawyer. For serious crimes, it is possible to be held without trial in preventive custody for up to two years.

MAPS City Maps

The city maps in this book, combined with tourist office maps, are generally adequate. More detailed maps are available in Italy at good bookshops, such as Feltrinelli. De Agostini, Touring Club Italiano (TCI) and Michelin all publish detailed city maps. Lonely Planet publishes city maps to Rome and Venice.

Road Atlases

If you are driving around Italy, the Automobile Association's (AA) *Road Atlas Italy*, available in the UK, is scaled at 1:250,000 and includes 31 town maps. Just as good is Michelin's *Tourist and Motoring Atlas Italy*, scaled at 1:300,000, with 74 town maps.

In Italy, De Agostini publishes a comprehensive *Atlante Turistico Stradale d'Italia* (1:250,000), which includes 140 city maps. TCI publishes an *Atlante Stradale d'Italia* (1:200,000) divided into three parts – Nord, Centro and Sud (€54 for the lot). They contain a total of 147 city maps.

Small-Scale Maps

Michelin has a series of good fold-out country maps. No 735 covers the whole country on a scale of 1:1,000,000. You could also consider the series of six area maps at 1:400,000. TCI publishes a decent map of Italy at 1:800,000, as well as a series of regional maps at 1:200,000 (costing €7).

Walking Maps

Maps of walking trails in the Alps and Apennines are available at all major bookshops in Italy, but the best are the TCI bookshops.

The best walking maps are the 1:25,000 scale series published by Tabacco (mainly covering the north). It also does maps on a grander scale. Kompass also publishes

1:25,000 scale maps of various parts of Italy, as well as a 1:50,000 series and several in other scales (including one at 1:7500 of Capri). The Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) produces many hiking maps too, and Edizioni Multigraphic Florence produces a series of walking maps concentrating mainly on the Apennines.

The series of *Guide dei Monti d'Italia*, grey hardbacks published by the TCI and CAI, are exhaustive walking guides with maps.

MONEY

The euro is Italy's currency. The seven euro notes come in denominations of €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5. The eight euro coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, five, two and one cents.

Exchange rates are given on the inside front cover of this book. For the latest rates, check out www.xe.com. For some hints on costs in Italy, turn to p19.

Cash

There is little advantage in bringing foreign cash into Italy. True, exchange commissions are often lower than for travellers cheques, but the danger of losing the lot far outweighs such gains.

Credit & Debit Cards

Credit and debit cards can be used in a *bancomat* (ATM) displaying the appropriate sign. Visa and MasterCard are among the most widely recognised, but others like Cirrus and Maestro are also well covered. Only some banks give cash advances over the counter, so you're better off using ATMs. Cards are also good for payment in most hotels, restaurants, shops, supermarkets and tollbooths.

Check any charges with your bank. Most banks now build a fee of around 2.75% into every foreign transaction. In addition, ATM withdrawals can attract a further fee, usually around 1.5%.

It is not uncommon for ATMs in Italy to reject foreign cards. Try a few more ATMs displaying your card's logo before assuming the problem lies with your card.

If your card is lost, stolen or swallowed by an ATM, you can telephone toll free to have an immediate stop put on its use:

Amex (☎ 800 914 912)

Diners Club (☎ 800 864 064)

MasterCard (☎ 800 870 866)

Visa (☎ 800 819 014)

Moneychangers

You can change money in banks, at the post office or in a *cambio* (exchange office). Post offices and most banks are reliable and tend to offer the best rates. Commission fluctuates and depends on whether you are changing cash or cheques. Generally post office commissions are lowest and the exchange rate reasonable. The main advantage of exchange offices is the longer hours they keep, but watch for high commissions and inferior rates.

Taxes & Refunds

A value-added tax of around 20%, known as IVA (Imposta di Valore Aggiunto), is slapped onto just about everything in Italy. If you are a non-EU resident and spend more than €155 on a purchase, you can claim a refund when you leave. The refund only applies to purchases from affiliated retail outlets that display a 'tax free for tourists' (or similar) sign. You have to complete a form at the point of sale, then get it stamped by Italian customs as you leave. At major airports you can then get an immediate cash refund; otherwise it will be refunded to your credit card. For information, pick up a pamphlet on the scheme from participating stores.

Tipping

You are not expected to tip on top of restaurant service charges but you can leave a little extra if you feel service warrants it. If there is no service charge, the customer should consider leaving a 10% tip, but this is not obligatory. In bars, Italians often leave small change as a tip, maybe only €0.10. Tipping taxi drivers is not common practice, but you are expected to tip the porter at top-end hotels.

Travellers Cheques

Traditionally a safe way to carry money and possibly not a bad idea as a backup, travellers cheques have been outmoded by plastic. Various readers have reported having trouble changing travellers cheques in Italy and it seems most banks apply hefty commissions, even on cheques denominated in euros.

Visa, Travelex and Amex are widely accepted brands. Get most of your cheques in fairly large denominations to save on per-cheque commission charges. Amex exchange offices do not charge commission to exchange travellers cheques.

It's vital to keep your initial receipt, along with a record of your cheque numbers and the ones you have used, separate from the cheques. Take along your passport as identification when you go to cash travellers cheques.

Phone numbers to report lost or stolen cheques:

Amex (☎ 800 914 912)

MasterCard (☎ 800 870 866)

Travelex (☎ 800 872 050)

Visa (☎ 800 874 155)

POST

Le Poste (☎ 8031 60; www.poste.it), Italy's postal system, is not as reliable as it could be but has improved much over the years. The most efficient mail service is *posta prioritaria* (priority mail). For post office opening hours, see p854.

Francofolli (stamps) are available at post offices and authorised tobacconists (look for the official *tabacchi* sign: a big 'T', usually white on black). Since letters often need to be weighed, what you get at the tobacconist for international airmail will occasionally be an approximation of the proper rate. Tobacconists keep regular shop hours (p854).

Postal Rates & Services

The cost of sending a letter by *via aerea* (air-mail) depends on its weight, size and where it is being sent. Most people use *posta prioritaria*, guaranteed to deliver letters sent to Europe within three days and to the rest of the world within four to eight days. Letters up to 20g cost €0.65 within Europe, €0.85 to Africa, Asia, North and South America and €1 to Australia and New Zealand. Letters weighing 21g to 50g cost €1.45 within Europe, €1.50 to Africa, Asia and the Americas, and €1.80 to Australia and New Zealand.

Receiving Mail

Poste restante (general delivery) is known as *fermo posta* in Italy. Letters marked thus will be held at the counter of the same name in the main post office in the relevant town. Poste restante mail to Verona, for example, should be addressed as follows:

John SMITH,
Fermo Posta,
37100 Verona,
Italy

You will need to pick up your letters in person and you must present your passport or national ID.

Amex card or travellers cheque holders can use the free client mail-holding service at Amex offices. You can obtain a list of these from any Amex office. Take your passport with you when you go to pick up mail.

SHOPPING

Italy is a shopper's paradise, so bring your plastic well charged up and even an empty bag for your purchases (or just buy a new one while in Italy).

Fashion is probably one of the first things that springs to the mind of the serious retail lover. The big cities and tourist centres, especially Milan, Rome and Florence, are home to countless designer boutiques spilling over with clothes, shoes and accessories by all the great Italian names, and many equally enticing unknowns.

Foodies and wine-lovers will want to bring home some souvenirs for the kitchen, ranging from fine Parma ham to aromatic cheeses, from class wines (especially from Tuscany, Piedmont and the Veneto) to local tipples (such as Benevento's La Strega, grappa from Bassano del Grappa, or *limoncello*, the lemon-based liqueur common in Naples and Sicily as well as other parts of the south).

Many cities and provinces offer specialised products. Sicily is known for its ceramics, as is the town of Gubbina in Umbria. Shoes and leather goods are one of Florence's big calling cards. In Venice, seek out beautifully hand-made Carnevale masks, along with Murano glassware and Burano lace.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

The main disadvantage for solo travellers in Italy is the higher price they generally pay for accommodation. A single room in a hotel or *pensione* usually costs around two-thirds of the price of a double.

TELEPHONE Domestic Calls

As elsewhere in Europe, Italians choose from a host of choices for phone plans and rates, making it difficult to make generalisations about costs. A local call from a public phone costs €0.10 every minute and 10 seconds. For a long-distance call within Italy you pay €0.10 when the call is answered and then €0.10 every

57 seconds. Calling from a private phone is cheaper.

Telephone area codes all begin with 0 and consist of up to four digits. The area code is followed by a number of anything from four to eight digits. The area code is an integral part of the telephone number and must always be dialled, even when calling from next door. Mobile phone numbers begin with a three-digit prefix such as 330. Toll-free (free-phone) numbers are known as *numeri verdi* and usually start with 800. National call rate numbers start with 848, 899, 166 or 199. Some six-digit national rate numbers are also in use (such as those for Alitalia, rail and postal information).

For national directory inquiries, telephone ☎ 12.

International Calls

Direct international calls can easily be made from public telephones by using a phonecard. Dial ☎ 00 to get out of Italy, then the relevant country and area codes, followed by the telephone number.

A three-minute call to a landline in most European countries and across North America will cost about €0.90. Australasia would cost €2.90. Calling mobile phones is generally more expensive. You are better off using your country's direct-dialling services paid for at home-country rates (such as AT&T in the USA and Telstra in Australia). Get their access numbers before you leave home. Alternatively, try making calls from cheap rate call centres or using international call cards, which are often on sale at newspaper stands.

To make a reverse-charges (collect) international call from a public telephone, dial ☎ 170. All phone operators speak English. In Italy, the number for international directory inquiries is ☎ 4176.

To call Italy from abroad, call the international access number (usually 00), Italy's country code (☎ 39) and then the area code of the location you want, including the leading 0.

Mobile Phones

Italy uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with North American GSM 1900 or the totally different Japanese system (though some GSM 1900/900 phones do work here). If you have a

GSM phone, check with your service provider about using it in Italy and beware of calls being routed internationally (very expensive for a 'local' call).

Italy has one of the highest levels of mobile phone penetration in Europe, and you can get a temporary or prepaid account from several companies if you already own a GSM, dual- or tri-band cellular phone. You will usually need your passport to open an account. Always check with your mobile service provider in your home country to ascertain whether your handset allows use of another SIM card. If yours does, it can cost as little as €10 to activate a local prepaid SIM card (sometimes with €10 worth of calls on the card).

Of the four main mobile phone companies, TIM (Telecom Italia Mobile) and Vodafone have the densest networks of outlets across the country.

Payphones & Phonocards

Partly privatised Telecom Italia is the largest telecommunications organisation in Italy and its orange public payphones are liberally scattered about the country. The most common accept only *carte/schede telefoniche* (phonocards), although you'll still find some that take cards and coins. A few card phones accept credit cards.

Telecom payphones can be found in the streets, train stations and some stores as well as in Telecom offices. Where these offices are staffed, it is possible to make international calls and pay at the desk afterwards. You can buy phonocards (most commonly €2.50 or €5) at post offices, tobacconists and newsstands. You must break off the top left-hand corner of the card before you can use it. Phonocards have an expiry date. This is usually 31 December or 30 June depending on when you purchase the card.

Other companies, such as Infostrada and BT Italia, also operate a handful of public payphones, for which cards are usually available at newsstands.

You will find cut-price call centres in all of the main cities. Rates can be considerably lower than from Telecom payphones for international calls. You simply place your call from a private booth inside the centre and pay for it when you've finished. Alternatively, ask about international calling cards at newsstands and tobacconists. They can be hit and miss but are sometimes good value.

TIME

Italy is one hour ahead of GMT. Daylight-saving time, when clocks are moved forward one hour, starts on the last Sunday in March. Clocks are put back an hour on the last Sunday in October. Italy operates on a 24-hour clock.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The quality of tourist offices in Italy varies dramatically. Three tiers of tourist office exist: regional, provincial and local. They have different names, but roughly offer the same services, with the exception of regional offices, which are generally concerned with promotion, planning and budgeting.

Local & Provincial Tourist Offices

Throughout this book, offices are referred to as tourist offices rather than by their more elaborate titles. The Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno e Turismo (AAST) is the local tourist office in many towns and cities of the south. AASTs have town-specific information and should also know about bus routes and museum opening times. The Azienda di Promozione Turistica (APT) is the provincial (ie main) tourist office, which should have information on the town you are in and the surrounding province. *Informazione e Assistenza ai Turisti* (IAT) has local tourist office branches in towns and cities, mostly in the northern half of Italy. Pro Loco is the local office in small towns and villages and is similar to the AAST office. Most tourist offices will respond to written and telephone requests for information.

Tourist offices are generally open from 8.30am to 12.30pm or 1pm and 3pm to 7pm Monday to Friday. Hours are usually extended in summer, when some offices also open on Saturday or Sunday.

Information booths at most major train stations tend to keep similar hours but in some cases operate only in summer. Staff can usually provide a city map, list of hotels and information on the major sights.

English, and sometimes French or German, is spoken at tourist offices in larger towns and major tourist areas. German is spoken in Alto Adige and French in much of the Valle d'Aosta.

Regional Tourist Authorities

As a rule, the regional tourist authorities are more concerned with planning and market-

ing than offering a public information service, with work done at a provincial and local level. Addresses of local tourist offices appear throughout the guide. Following are some useful regional websites. In some cases you need to look for the Tourism or Turismo link within the regional site. At the website of the **Italian National Tourist Office** (www.enit.it) you can find details of all provincial and local tourist offices across the country.

Abruzzo (www.regione.abruzzo.it in Italian)

Basilicata (www.basilicatanet.it in Italian)

Calabria (www.turismo.regione.calabria.it)

Campania (www.turismoregionecampania.it)

Emilia-Romagna (www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it)

Friuli-Venezia Giulia (www.turismo.fvg.it)

Lazio (www.turislazio.it)

Le Marche (www.le-marche.com)

Liguria (www.turismo.liguriairete.it)

Lombardy (www.turismo.regione.lombardia.it)

Molise (www.regione.molise.it/turismo in Italian)

Piedmont (www.regione.piemonte.it/turismo in Italian)

Puglia (www.pugliaturismo.com)

Sardinia (www.regione.sardegna.it/tematiche/turismo in Italian)

Sicily (www.regione.sicilia.it/turismo)

Trentino-Alto Adige (www.trentino.to, www.provincia.bz.it)

Tuscany (www.turismo.toscana.it)

Umbria (www.umbria.org)

Valle d'Aosta (www.regione.vda.it/turismo)

Veneto (www.veneto.to)

Tourist Offices Abroad

Information on Italy is available from the **Italian National Tourist Office** (ENIT; ☎ 06 4 97 11; www.enit.it; Via Marghera 2, Rome, 00185) in the following countries.

Australia (☎ 02-9262 1666; italia@italiantourism.com.au; Level 4, 46 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Austria (☎ 01-505 16 39; delegation.wien@enit.at; Kärntnerring 4, Vienna, A-1010)

Canada (☎ 416-925 4882; www.italiantourism.com; Suite 907, South Tower, 175 Bloor St East, Toronto, M4W 3R8)

France (☎ 01 42 66 03 96; www.enit-france.com in French; 23 rue de la Paix, Paris, 75002)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-247 8398; www.enit.de in German; Kontorhaus Mitte, Friedrichstrasse 187, 10117); Frankfurt (☎ 069-259 126; Kaiserstrasse 65, 60329); Munich (☎ 089-531 317; Lenbachplatz 2, 80333)

Japan (☎ 03-3478 2051; www.enit.jp; 2-7-14 Minamiaoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 107-0062)

Netherlands (☎ 020-616 82 46; enitams@wirehub.nl; Stadhouderskade 2, 1054 ES Amsterdam)

Switzerland (☎ 043 466 40 40; info@enit.ch; Uraniastrasse 32, Zurich, 8001)

UK (☎ 020-7408 1254; italy@italiantouristboard.co.uk; 1 Princes St, London W1B 2AY)

USA Chicago (☎ 312-644 0996; www.italiantourism.com; 500 North Michigan Ave, Suite 2240, IL 60611); Los Angeles (☎ 310-820 1898; 12400 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 550, CA 90025); New York (☎ 212-245 4822; 630 Fifth Ave, Suite 1565, NY 10111)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Italy is not an easy country for disabled travellers and getting around can be a problem for wheelchair users. Even a short journey in a city or town can become a major expedition if cobblestone streets have to be negotiated. Although many buildings have lifts, they are not always wide enough for wheelchairs. Not an awful lot has been done to make life for the deaf and/or blind any easier either.

The Italian National Tourist Office (left) in your country may be able to provide advice on Italian associations for the disabled and information on what help is available. It may also carry a small brochure, *Services for Disabled Passengers*, published by Italian railways, which details facilities at stations and on trains. A handful of cities also publish general guides on accessibility, among them Bologna, Milan, Padua, Reggio Emilia, Turin, Venice and Verona.

Some organisations that may help:

Accessible Italy (☎ +378 94 11 11; www.accessibleitaly.com) A San Marino-based company that specialises in holiday services for the disabled, ranging from tours to the hiring of adapted transport. It can even arrange romantic Italian weddings. This is the best first port of call.

Consorzio Cooperativo Integrate (COIN; ☎ 800 271027 within Italy; www.coinsociale.it) Based in Rome, COIN is the best reference point for disabled travellers. It provides information on the capital (including transport and access) and is happy to share its contacts throughout Italy.

Holiday Care (☎ 0845 124 9971; www.holidaycare.org.uk) Has information on hotels with disabled access, where to hire equipment and tour operators dealing with the disabled.

Italia Per Tutti (www.italiapertutti.it) The website has a region by region search engine with lists of hotels, restaurants and more with disabled access and other information.

You can also check out **Tour in Umbria** (www.tourinumbria.org) and **Milano per Tutti** (www.milanooperutti.it) for information on getting around those destinations.

VISAS

Italy signed the Schengen Convention, an agreement whereby 13 EU member countries (excluding the UK, Ireland and the new members that have entered the union since 2004) plus Iceland and Norway agreed to abolish checks at common borders. Legal residents of one Schengen country do not require a visa for another. Citizens of the remaining 14 EU countries and Switzerland are also exempt. Nationals of some other countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the USA, do not require visas for tourist visits of up to 90 days.

All non-EU nationals (except those from Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) entering Italy for any reason other than tourism (such as study or work) should contact an Italian consulate, as they may need a specific visa. They should also have their passport stamped on entry as, without a stamp, they could encounter problems when trying to obtain a residence permit (*permesso di soggiorno*).

The standard tourist visa is valid for up to 90 days. A Schengen visa issued by one Schengen country is generally valid for travel in other Schengen countries. However, individual Schengen countries may impose additional restrictions on certain nationalities. It is worth checking visa regulations with the consulate of each country you plan to visit.

You must apply for a Schengen visa in your country of residence. You can apply for only two Schengen visas in any 12-month period and they are not renewable inside Italy. If you are going to visit more than one Schengen country, you should apply for the visa at a consulate of your main destination country or the first country you intend to visit.

For more information on the wonderful world of Schengen visas, check out www.eurovisa.info/SchengenCountries.htm.

EU citizens do not require any permits to live or work in Italy, but may be asked to report to a local police station after three months have elapsed. After five years' continuous residence, they may apply for a document granting permanent residence.

Copies

All important documents (passport data page and visa page, credit cards, travel insurance policy, tickets, driver's licence etc) should be photocopied before you leave home. Leave a copy with someone at home

and keep one with you, separate from the originals.

Permesso di Soggiorno

Non-EU citizens planning to stay at the same address for more than one week are supposed to report to the police station to receive a *permesso di soggiorno* (a permit to remain in the country). Tourists staying in hotels are not required to do this.

A *permesso di soggiorno* only really becomes a necessity if you plan to study, work (legally) or live in Italy. Obtaining one is never a pleasant experience; it involves long queues and the frustration of arriving at the counter only to find you don't have the necessary documents.

The exact requirements, like specific documents and *marche da bollo* (official stamps), can change. In general, you will need a valid passport (if possible containing a stamp with your date of entry into Italy), a special visa issued in your own country if you are planning to study (for non-EU citizens), four passport photos and proof of your ability to support yourself financially. You can apply at the *ufficio stranieri* (foreigners' bureau) of the police station closest to where you're staying.

EU citizens do not require a *permesso di soggiorno*.

Study Visas

Non-EU citizens who want to study at a university or language school in Italy must have a study visa. These can be obtained from your nearest Italian embassy or consulate. You will normally require confirmation of your enrolment, proof of payment of fees and adequate funds to support yourself. The visa covers only the period of the enrolment. This type of visa is renewable within Italy but, again, only with confirmation of ongoing enrolment and proof that you are able to support yourself (bank statements are preferred).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Italy is not a dangerous country for women to travel in. Clearly, as with anywhere in the world, women travelling alone need to take certain precautions and, in some parts of the country, be prepared for more than their fair share of unwanted attention. Eye-to-eye contact is the norm in Italy's daily flirtatious interplay. Eye contact can become outright staring the further south you travel.

Lone women may find it difficult to remain alone. In many places, local lotharios will try it on with exasperating insistence, which can be flattering or a pain. Foreign women are particular objects of male attention in tourist towns like Florence and more generally in the south. Usually the best response to undesired advances is to ignore them. If that doesn't work, politely tell your interlocutors you're waiting for your *marito* (husband) or *fidanzato* (boyfriend) and, if necessary, walk away. Avoid becoming aggressive as this may result in an unpleasant confrontation. If all else fails, approach the nearest member of the police.

Watch out for men with wandering hands on crowded buses. Either keep your back to the wall or make a loud fuss if someone starts fondling your behind. A loud '*Che schifo!*' (How disgusting!) will usually do the trick. If a more serious incident occurs, report it to the police, who are then required to press charges.

Women travelling alone should use their common sense. Avoid walking alone in dark streets, and look for hotels that are central (unsafe areas are noted in this book). Women should avoid hitchhiking alone. Use some dress sense, too. Skimpy beachwear is not a good idea in the south (except perhaps at the beach), and especially in more conservative areas, such as the smaller towns.

WORK

It is illegal for non-EU citizens to work in Italy without a *permesso di lavoro* (work permit), but trying to obtain one can be time-consuming. EU citizens are allowed to work in Italy but, like Italian citizens, require a *codice fiscale* (tax-file number).

Immigration laws require non-EU workers to be 'legalised' through their employers, and this applies even to cleaners and babysitters. The employers then pay pension and health-insurance contributions. This doesn't mean there aren't employers willing to take people without the right papers.

Work options depend on a number of factors (eg location, length of stay, nationality and qualifications) but, in the major cities at least, job possibilities for English speakers can be surprisingly plentiful. Go armed with a CV (if possible in Italian) and be persistent.

Jobs are advertised in local newspapers and magazines, such as Rome's *Porta Portese* (weekly) and *Wanted in Rome* (fortnightly) or *Secondamano* in Milan, and you can also place

an ad yourself. A useful guide is *Living, Studying and Working in Italy* by Travis Neighbor Ward and Monica Lerner.

The most easily secured jobs are short-term work in bars, hostels, on farms, babysitting and volunteering (in return for accommodation and some expenses paid). An obvious work source for English-speaking foreigners is teaching English. Most of the reputable language schools will only hire people who hold a work permit. The more professional schools will require you to have a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate.

Some useful organisations to start the job hunt:

Au Pair International (☎ 051 26 75 75; www.au-pair-international.com; Via Sante Vincenzi 46, Bologna) Organises au pair jobs in Italian families for women aged 18 to 30. EU citizens are preferred, but citizens of countries such as Australia, Canada and the USA can be placed for up to three months.

British Institutes (Map pp256-7; ☎ 02 720 94 595; www.britishinstitutes.it; Via Giosué Carducci 5, Milan) Recruits English-speaking teachers. Italian essential.

Cambridge School (☎ 045 800 31 54; www.cambridge-school.it; Via Rosmini 6, Verona) Another major employer of English teachers.

Center for Cultural Exchange (☎ 866-684 9675; www.cci-exchange.com; 746 North LaSalle Dr, Chicago, IL 60610, USA) A nonprofit cultural-exchange organisation that offers short-term internships in Italy.

Concordia International Volunteer Projects (☎ 01273 422218; www.concordia-ive.org.uk; 19 North St, Portslade, Brighton BN41 1DH, UK) Short-term community-based projects covering the environment, archaeology and the arts. You might find yourself working as a volunteer on a restoration project or in a nature reserve.

European Youth Portal (http://europa.eu.int/youth/working/index_eu_en.html) Has various links suggesting work and volunteering options across Europe. You can narrow down the search to Italy, where you will find pages of general work links and more specific links on things like au pair opportunities, seasonal work and volunteering.

Italian Association for Education, Exchanges & Intercultural Activities (AFSAI; ☎ 06 537 03 32; www.afsai.org; Viale dei Colli Portuensi 345, Rome) Financed by the EU, this voluntary programme runs projects of six to 12 months for those aged between 16 and 25 years. Knowledge of Italian is required.

Recrutality (www.recrutality.it) For graduates looking for long-term employment in Italy, this useful website links up to professional employers.

World Wide Organisation of Organic Farming (www.wwoof.it) For a membership fee of €25 this organisation provides a list of farms looking for volunteer workers.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

Competition between airlines means you should be able to pick up a reasonably priced fare to Italy, even if you are coming from as far away as Australia. If you live in Europe, you can also travel overland by car, bus or train.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Entering Italy is relatively simple. Land crossings from neighbouring EU countries don't require a passport check.

Airport security is much more stringent than in the past. You will need to arrive earlier at the airport than you may have previously – allowing around two hours or more is advisable for international flights. Many airlines allow you to check in online, even if you have baggage, which can save time.

Check what the current policy is regarding restrictions on hand luggage, electronic items and liquids before you travel, as this is subject to change. Most airlines now specify that only one piece of hand luggage is permitted per person, plus one briefcase or laptop. At the time of going to press, liquids, gels, foams and foodstuffs were allowed in hand baggage in limited quantities by most airlines – usually

in amounts not over 100mL (if you have over this amount you can usually buy transparent bottles at the airport in which to decant them). If you carry baby milk you may have to taste it in front of security staff. To save hassle, pack liquids in your luggage and only keep absolute essentials (such as baby milk or medicines) in your hand luggage.

Passport

Citizens of the EU-member states can travel to Italy with their national identity cards. People from countries that do not issue ID cards, such as the UK or USA, must carry a valid passport. All non-EU nationals must have a full valid passport. If applying for a visa, check that the expiry date of your passport is at least some months off. See p866 for more information about obtaining a visa and permits for longer stays.

AIR

High seasons in the air are June to September, Christmas and Easter. Shoulder season will often run from mid-September to the end of October and again in April. Low season is generally November to March.

Airports & Airlines

Italy's main intercontinental gateway is the **Leonardo da Vinci Airport** (Fiumicino; ☎ 06 6 59 51;

THINGS CHANGE

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change: prices for international travel are volatile, routes are introduced and cancelled, schedules change, special deals come and go, and rules and visa requirements alter. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to ensure you understand how a fare works, and be aware of the current security requirements for international travel.

For a good deal, get quotes from as many airlines and travel agents as possible. The details given here should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

www.adr.it) in Rome, but many low-cost carriers land at Rome's **Ciampino Airport** (☎ 06 6 59 51; www.adr.it) – see p166 for more details. Regular intercontinental flights also serve Milan's **Malpensa Airport** (☎ 02 748 522 00; www.sea-aeroporto.milano.it), 50km from the city. Plenty of flights from other European cities also fly to regional capitals (see p870 and p871 for more details).

Many European and international airlines compete with the country's national carrier, Alitalia. Listed here are some of the more frequent carriers, with Italian contact telephone numbers unless otherwise stated:

Aerlingus (airline code EI; ☎ 02434 5 83 26; www.aerlingus.com) To/from Dublin.

Air Canada (airline code AC; ☎ 06 650 11 462, 1-888-247-2262; www.aircanada.com)

Air France (airline code AF; ☎ 848 88 44 66; www.airfrance.com)

Air Malta (airline code KM; ☎ 800 662 22 111; www.airmalta.com)

Air One (airline code AP; ☎ 199 20 70 80, 06 488 80 069; www.flyairone.it)

Alitalia (airline code AZ; ☎ 06 22 22; www.alitalia.it)

American Airlines (airline code AA; ☎ 06 6605 3169, 1-800-433-7300; www.aa.com)

Blue Panorama (airline code BV; ☎ 899 10 33 53; www.blue-panorama.com)

Blu Express (airline code BV; ☎ 06 602 14 577; www.blu-express.com)

BMI (airline code BD; ☎ 199 40 00 44; www.flybmi.com) To/from London Heathrow.

British Airways (airline code BA; ☎ 199 71 22 66; www.britishairways.com)

Delta Air Lines (airline code DL; ☎ 848 78 03 76; www.delta.com)

EasyJet (airline code U2; ☎ 848 88 77 66; www.easyjet.com)

Emirates Airlines (airline code EK; ☎ 06 452 06 060; www.emirates.com)

Eurofly (airline code GJ; ☎ 199 50 99 60; www.eurofly.it) To/from Moscow and New York.

KLM (airline code KL; ☎ 199 41 41 99; www.klm.com)

Lufthansa (airline code LH; ☎ 199 40 00 44; www.lufthansa.com)

Meridiana (airline code IG; ☎ 89 28 98 39, in Europe +39-0789 52 682, in the UK 0845 35 55 588; www.meridiana.it)

Qantas (airline code QF; ☎ 848 35 00 10; www.qantas.com.au)

Ryanair (airline code FR; ☎ 899 67 89 10; www.ryanair.com)

Singapore Airlines (airline code SQ; ☎ 02 777 29 21; www.singaporeair.com)

TAP Portugal (airline code TP; ☎ In Portugal 351 707 205 700; www.flytap.com)

Thai Airways International (airline code TG; ☎ 064 478 13 304; www.thaiair.com)

Tuifly (airline code X3; ☎ 199 19 26 92; www.tuifly.com) To/from several German cities.

United Airlines (airline code UA; ☎ in the US 1-800-538-2929, in Italy 02 69 63 37 07; www.united.com)

Virgin Express (airline code TV; ☎ 899 800 903; www.virgin-express.com)

Tickets

World aviation has never been so competitive and the internet is fast becoming the easiest way to find and book reasonably priced seats.

Full-time students and those under 26 have access to discounted fares. You have to show a document proving your date of birth or a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC) when buying your ticket. Other cheap deals are the discounted tickets released to travel agents and specialist discount agencies. Most major cities carry newspapers with Sunday travel sections containing ads for these agencies, often known as brokers, consolidators or bucket shops. Also check the websites directly for deals on low-cost carriers, such as Ryanair, Easyjet and Virgin Express. Note that some have started charging extra for hold luggage.

Many of the major travel websites can offer competitive fares, such as:

Booking Buddy (www.bookingbuddy.com)

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com)

Deckchair (www.deckchair.com)

Discount-Tickets.com (www.discount-tickets.com)

Ebookers.com (www.ebookers.com)

Expedia (www.expedia.com)

Kayak (www.kayak.com)

Last minute (www.lastminute.com)

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)

Priceline (www.priceline.com)

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com)

Africa

From South Africa many major airlines fly to Italy, most notably: British Airways from Cape Town and Johannesburg through the UK; Air France with connections throughout Europe; and Lufthansa from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg connecting through Germany. Ethiopian Airlines flies from Johannesburg to Rome. Emirates Airlines flies between Dubai and Rome. In South Africa try **Flight Centre** (☎ 0860 400 727; www.flightcentre.co.za) or **STA Travel** (☎ 0861 781 781; www.statravel.co.za).

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Asia

Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong are the best places to find discount tickets. **Cathay Pacific** (www.cathaypacific.com) flies nonstop from Hong Kong to Rome. **STA Travel** (www.statravel.com) has offices in Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. In Hong Kong many travellers use the **Hong Kong Student Travel Bureau** (☎ 2730 3269; www.hkst.com in Chinese).

Singapore Air flies to Rome three to seven times per week with one or two stops en route. Thai Airways runs regular flights direct from Bangkok to Rome, as well as to Milan Malpensa. Both airlines also have connecting flights with Australia and New Zealand.

Similarly, discounted fares can be picked up from Qantas, which usually transits in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok or Singapore.

Australia

Flights from Australia to Europe generally go via Southeast Asian capitals. Qantas and Alitalia have occasional direct flights or more-regular trips that make one stop. Also try Malaysia Airlines and the **Star Alliance carriers** (www.staralliance.com), such as Thai Airways, Singapore Airlines or Austrian Air. Flights from Perth are generally a few hundred dollars cheaper.

STA Travel (☎ 134 782; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) both have dozens of offices throughout Australia and are renowned for cheap deals.

Canada

Alitalia flies direct to Milan from Toronto, with connections on to Rome. Air Transat flies nonstop from Montreal to Rome in summer.

Air Canada flies daily from Toronto to Rome, direct and via Montreal and Frankfurt. British Airways, Air France, KLM and Lufthansa all fly to Italy via their respective home countries. Canada's main student travel organisation is **Travel Cuts** (☎ 1 866 246 9762; www.travelcuts.com), with offices in all major cities.

Continental Europe

All national European carriers offer services to Italy. The largest, Air France, Lufthansa and KLM, have offices in all major European cities. Italy's national carrier, Alitalia, has a huge range of offers on all European destinations. TAP Portugal serves Portugal.

The cheapest way to fly is via a low-cost airline:

Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com) Flies from Berlin.

Air One (www.flyairone.it) Flies from Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg and London.

Clickair (www.clickair.com) Flies from Valencia.

Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) Flies from Paris, Berlin, Lyon, Geneva and Basel.

Iberia (www.iberia.com) Flies from Madrid.

Meridiana (www.meridiana.it) Flies from Barcelona and Madrid.

Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) Flies from Brussels, Dublin, Barcelona, Madrid, Stockholm and various other cities.

SAS (www.scandinavian.net) Flies from Copenhagen and Stockholm.

Sky Europe (www.skyeurope.com) Flies from Prague, Bratislava and Budapest.

SN Brussels Airlines (www.flysn.com) Flies from Brussels.

Spanair (www.spanair.com) Flies from Barcelona.

Virgin Express (www.virgin-express.com) Flies from Brussels.

Vueling (www.vueling.com) Flies from Madrid.

New Zealand

Singapore Airlines flies from Auckland through Singapore to Rome's Fiumicino – sometimes with more than one stop. New Zealand Air flies via London. **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 24 35 44; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0800 47 44 00; www.statravel.co.nz) have offices in Auckland, as well as in various other cities.

UK & Ireland

The cheapest way to fly between the UK and Ireland and Italy is the no-frills way. **EasyJet** (www.easyjet.com), flies to Milan, Rome, Pisa, Rimini, Venice, Naples and Palermo. The main competitor is Irish **Ryanair** (www.ryanair.com) – its tickets are usually cheaper and it flies to more destinations, including Brindisi, Bari, Milan, Parma, Pisa, Rome, Turin, Genoa, Venice, Rimini and Palermo. Some of these routes are seasonal. **BMI Baby** (www.bmibaby.com) flies to Naples from London and Birmingham (April to October). British Midland also offers some excellent deals. Prices vary wildly according to season and depend on how far in advance you book. Italian **Air One** (www.flyairone.it) also operates flights between London City Airport and Bari, Brindisi, Palermo, Rome, Turin and Venice.

The two national airlines linking the UK and Italy are British Airways and Alitalia, both operating regular flights to Rome, Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples, Palermo, Turin and Pisa.

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk) and **Traillfinders** (☎ 020 7292 18 88; www.traillfinders.com), with offices throughout the UK, sell discounted and student tickets.

Most British travel agents are registered with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). If you have paid for your flight with an ABTA-registered agent who then goes bust, ABTA will guarantee a refund or some alternative.

USA

Delta Airlines and Alitalia have nonstop daily flights from New York's JFK airport to Rome Fiumicino and Milan Malpensa, while Continental flies nonstop to both from Newark. American Airlines flies from Chicago and JFK to Rome.

Discount travel agencies in the USA are known as consolidators. San Francisco is the ticket-consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in other big cities.

STA Travel (☎ 800 781 40 40; www.statravel.com) has offices in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and many more locations. Fares vary wildly depending on season, availability and luck. **Discover Italy** (☎ 1 866 878 74 77; www.discoveritaly.com) offers flight-, hotel- and villa-booking services.

LAND

There are plenty of options for entering Italy by train, bus or private vehicle. Bus is the cheapest option but services are less frequent, less comfortable and significantly longer than the train. Check whether you require a visa to pass through any countries on your way.

Border Crossings

The main points of entry to Italy are the Mont Blanc Tunnel from France at Chamonix, which connects with the A5 for Turin and Milan; the Grand St Bernard tunnel from Switzerland, which also connects with the A5, and the Gotthard tunnel from Switzerland (which will have a new parallel railway tunnel, Gotthard Base Tunnel, possibly by 2015, and which will cut the journey time from Zurich to Milan by one hour); the new Swiss Lötschberg Base Tunnel (opened in 2007) which connects with the century-old Simplon tunnel into Italy; and the Brenner Pass from Austria, which connects with the A22 to Bologna. All are open year-round. Mountain passes are often closed in winter and sometimes even in autumn and spring, making the tunnels a more reliable option. Make sure you have snow chains if driving in winter.

Regular trains on two lines connect Italy with the main cities in Austria and on into Germany, France or Eastern Europe. Those crossing the frontier at the Brenner Pass go to Innsbruck, Stuttgart and Munich. Those crossing at Tarvisio in the east proceed to Vienna, Salzburg and Prague. Trains from Milan head for Switzerland and on into France and the Netherlands. The main international train line to Slovenia crosses near Trieste.

Bus

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) is a consortium of European coach companies that operates across Europe with offices in all major European cities. Italy-bound buses head to Milan, Rome, Florence, Siena or Venice and all come equipped with on-board toilet facilities. You can contact them in your own country or in Italy and their multilingual website gives comprehensive details of prices, passes and travel agencies where you can book tickets.

Car & Motorcycle

CONTINENTAL EUROPE

When driving in Europe always carry proof of ownership of a private vehicle. Third-party motor insurance is also a minimum requirement. Ask your insurer for a European Accident Statement (EAS) form, which can simplify matters in the event of an accident. A European breakdown-assistance policy is also a good investment. In Italy, assistance can be obtained through the **Automobile Club Italiano** (ACI; ☎ 803 116, ☎ for 24hr information 02 661 65 116; www.aci.it in Italian).

Every vehicle travelling across an international border should display a nationality plate of its country of registration.

You can prebook a car before you leave home (for multinational car-rental agencies see p877), but you can often find a better deal by contacting the agency directly (check individual chapters for contact information). Check with your credit-card company to see if it offers a Collision Damage Waiver, which covers you for additional damage if you use that card to pay for the car. Many car-rental agencies request that you bring the car back with the tank filled, and will charge you extra if it's not. Young drivers should call ahead, as many companies do not rent cars or bikes to drivers aged 25 and younger.

Italy is made for motorcycle touring, and motorcyclists swarm into the country in sum-

mer to meander around the scenic roads. With a bike you rarely have to book ahead for ferries and can enter restricted-traffic areas in cities. Crash helmets are compulsory. The US-based **Beach's Motorcycle Adventures** (☎ 1-716 773 4960; www.beachs-mca.com) can arrange two-week tours around various parts of Italy in May and October. Riders need to have a motorcycle licence – an international one is best.

One interesting way to get around Italy is to rent or buy a camper van. Rental rates in high season can work out at as little as €15 per day, but if you are travelling for more than a few weeks, it is sometimes more cost-effective to buy and then sell back the camper van. Check **IdeaMerge** (www.ideamerge.com) for where you can lease or buy vehicles.

UK

Coming from the UK, you can take your car across to France by ferry or via the Channel Tunnel on **Eurotunnel** (☎ 0870 35 35 35; www.eurotunnel.com). The latter runs 10 crossings (35 minutes) a day between Folkestone and Calais year-round. You pay for the vehicle only and fares vary according to timing, season and advance purchase, but start at UK£49 each way.

For breakdown assistance both the **RAC** (☎ 0800 5722 722; www.rac.co.uk) and the **Automobile Association** (AA; ☎ 0870 600 03 71; www.theaa.com) offer comprehensive cover in Europe.

Train

If you have the time, train can be a glorious, bygone, relaxing way to travel to Italy, with comfortable couchettes, civilised dining cars, and arrival directly in the centre of your destination city.

CONTINENTAL EUROPE

The **Thomas Cook European Timetable** has a complete listing of train schedules. The timetable is updated monthly and available from Thomas Cook offices worldwide for around €15. It is always advisable, and sometimes compulsory, to book seats on international trains to/from Italy. Some of the main international services include transport for private cars. Consider taking long journeys overnight as the €20 or so extra for a sleeper costs substantially less than Italian hotels.

UK

The passenger-train **Eurostar** (☎ 0870 518 61 86; www.eurostar.com) travels between London and

RAIL PASSES

Eurail Passes are for non-European residents and are supposed to be bought outside Europe. They are available from travel agencies and websites worldwide. You can check out details or buy them **Eurail International** (www.eurail.com). To qualify for a Youth pass, passengers must be under 26 years old on the first day of the validity of the pass.

The InterRail Pass is available to EU residents or people who've lived in Europe for at least six months. They can be bought at most major stations and student travel outlets, or try www.interrail.com.

Eurail Pass

Eurail offers passes covering varying numbers of countries – for these see the website for details – as well as a national pass valid for two months. If there are two to five people travelling together, a Saver version is available, offering about a 15% discount. Passes also allow their holders to receive discounts or free passage on a variety of travel services.

National Pass	2nd class	1st class
3 days	€141	€177
4 days	€159	€198
6 days	€195	€240
8 days	€231	€282

InterRail Pass

The InterRail Pass is only for people who have lived in Europe for at least six months. The French railway system manages this pass, which covers 30 countries, but tickets are available at many travel agents and on a plethora of websites all over Europe. Global passes cover every country (see www.interrail.com for details), or you can buy a national pass for Italy valid for one month. Children under 12 pay half the adult fare.

National Pass	Under 26	Adult 2nd class
3 days	€71	€109
4 days	€90	€139
6 days	€123	€189
8 days	€149	€229

Paris, and London and Brussels. Alternatively you can get a train ticket that includes crossing the Channel by ferry, SeaCat or hovercraft.

For the latest fare information on journeys to Italy, including Eurostar fares, contact the **Rail Europe Travel Centre** (☎ 0870 84 88 48; www.railurope.co.uk). A Trenitalia Pass can be bought in advance in the UK from **Rail Pass Direct** (☎ 0870 084 1413; www.railpassdirect.co.uk) or **Rail Choice** (www.railchoice.com).

SEA

Dozens of ferry companies connect Italy with virtually every other Mediterranean country. The helpful search engine **Traghettonline** (www.traghettonline.com) covers all the ferry companies in the Mediterranean; you can also book online. Tickets are most expensive in summer, and many routes are only operated in sum-

mer. Prices for vehicles usually vary according to their size.

Ferry companies and their destinations: **Adriatica** (☎ 199 12 31 99; www.adriatica.it) Brindisi to Durrës (Durazzo) in Albania.

Agoudimos Lines (☎ 0831 52 14 08; www.agoudimos.it; Via Giannelli 23) Brindisi to Igoumenitsa, via Corfu.

Blue Star Ferries (☎ 080 52 11 416; www.bluestarferries.com) Brindisi and Ancona to Patras and Igoumenitsa.

Endeavor Lines/Hellenic Mediterranean Lines (☎ 0831 52 85 31; www.ferries.gr; Corso Garibaldi 8)

Brindisi to Corfu, Igoumenitsa and Patras, and to Cephalonia – from where you can get a ferry to Zante (Schinari).

Grandi Navi Veloci (☎ 010 209 45 91; www1.gnv.it) Genoa to Barcelona.

Grimaldi Ferries (☎ 081 49 64 44; www.grimaldi-ferries.com) Plies the Mediterranean between Civitavecchia, Livorno, Salerno and Palermo to Tunisia and Barcelona (the Spain routes are part of the Eurail pass system).

Jadrolinija (☎ in Croatia +385 51 666 111; www.jadrolinija.hr) From Ancona to destinations along the Croatian coast, including Split and Zadar and from Bari to Dubrovnik.

Marmara Lines (☎ 0831 56 86 33; www.marmaralines.com; Corso Garibaldi 19) Brindisi to Cesme (Turkey).

Minoan Lines (☎ in Greece +30 2810 399800; www.minoan.gr) Venice, Brindisi and Ancona to Igoumenitsa, Corfu or Patras.

Montenegro Lines (☎ 080 578 98 27; www.morfimare.it) Reservations via Morfirmare Travel Agency (see p690); Bari to Bar (Montenegro), Cephalonia, Igoumenitsa, and Patrasso.

Skenderbeg Lines (☎ 0831 52 54 48; www.skenderbeglines.com; Corso Garibaldi 88) Brindisi to Vlore (Valona; in Albania).

SNAV (☎ 0831 52 54 92; www.snav.it) Brindisi to Corfu and on to Paxos.

Superfast (☎ 080 528 28 28; www.superfast.com) Bari to Igoumenitsa and Patras (Greece), and Corfu. Accepts Eurail, Eurodomino and Inter-Rail passes (port taxes and a high-season supplement payable).

Tirrenia Navigazione (☎ 081 0171998; www.tirrenia.it) Connects all major Italian ports, including on Sicily and Sardinia.

Ventouris Ferries (☎ 080 521 76 99/521 27 56 (Greece/Albania line); www.ventouris.gr) Bari to Igoumenitsa, Corfu, and Durrës (Albania).

Virtu Ferries (☎ 095 53 57 11; www.virtuferries.com) Malta to Catania.

GETTING AROUND

You can reach almost any destination in Italy by train, bus or ferry and services are efficient and cheap; for longer distances there are plenty of domestic air services.

Your own wheels give you the most freedom, but be aware that *benzina* (petrol) and autostrada (highway) tolls are quite expensive and that Italian drivers have a style all of their own: the stress of driving and parking your car in a big Italian city could cancel out the relaxation element of your trip. One solution is to take public transport between large cities and use a car only for country drives.

AIR

Internal flights in Italy are increasingly competitive, with an increase in low-cost traffic. Some domestic airlines in Italy:

Air Alps (airline code A6; ☎ 045 288 61 40; www.airalps.it)

Air Dolomiti (airline code EN; ☎ 045 288 61 40; www.airdolomiti.it)

Air One (airline code AP; ☎ 199 20 70 80, 06 488 80 069; www.flyairone.it)

Alitalia (airline code AZ; ☎ 06 22 22; www.alitalia.it)

Alpi Eagles (airline code E8; ☎ 899 50 00 58; www.alpi.eagles.com)

Blu Express (airline code BV; ☎ 06 602 14 577; www.blu-express.com)

Club Air (airline code 6P; ☎ 045 861 77 15; www.club.air.it)

Meridiana (airline code IG; ☎ 89 29 28, in Europe +39-0789 52 682, in the UK 0845 355 5588; www.meridiana.it)

MyAir (airline code 81; ☎ 899 50 00 60; www.myair.com)

Volare Web (airline code VA; ☎ 070 460 33 97; www.volareweb.com)

Wind Jet (airline code IV; ☎ 899 65 65 05; www.volawindjet.it)

Lots of domestic flights use the secondary airports, such as in Rome (Ciampino), Pisa, Milan (Linate), Naples, Palermo, Catania, Venice, Florence, Bologna and Cagliari, and other, smaller airports throughout the country. But many internal flights also use the larger airports such as Rome Fiumicino. Domestic flights can be booked online (for low-cost airlines, this is the only way), or you can contact any travel agency (listed throughout this guide).

Alitalia and Lufthansa offer regular domestic flights, with a range of discounts for young people, families, seniors and weekend travellers, as well as advance purchase deals. A one-way fare is generally half the cost of the return fare. Spanair, the Spanish low-cost airline, also offer some internal flights.

Airport taxes are factored into the price of your ticket.

BICYCLE

Cycling is a national pastime in Italy. There are no special road rules, but you would be wise to equip yourself with a helmet and lights. With good reason, you cannot take bikes onto the autostradas. If you plan to bring your own bike, check with your airline for any additional costs. The bike will need to be disassembled and packed for the journey. Make sure you include a few tools, spare parts and a bike lock and chain.

Bikes can be taken on any train carrying the bicycle logo. The cheapest way to do this is to buy a separate bicycle ticket (€3.50, or €5 to €12 on Intercity, Eurostar and Euronight

trains), available even at the self-service kiosks. You can use this ticket for 24 hours, making a day trip quite economical. Bikes dismantled and stored in a bag can be taken for free, even on night trains, and all ferries allow free bicycle passage.

In the UK, **Cyclists' Touring Club** (☎ 0870 873 00 60; www.ctc.org.uk) can help you plan your tour or organise a guided tour. Membership costs £12 for under-18s and students, and £34 for adults.

Rome's **Collalti Bici dal 1899** (☎ 06 68801084; Via Pellegrino 82), close to Campo di Fiori, is a splendid, historic bike shop, where you can buy or hire. Staff are helpful and can do repairs.

Hire

Bikes are available for hire in most Italian towns and many places have both city and mountain bikes. Rental costs for a city bike start at €10/30 per day/week.

Purchase

If you shop around, bargain prices for bikes range from about €100 for a standard ladies' bike without gears to €210 for a mountain bike with 16 gears. A good place to shop for bargains is **Tacconi Sport** (www.tacconisport.com), which buys in bulk. It has large outlets near Perugia, Arezzo, Trento and in San Marino.

BOAT

Navi (large ferries) service Sicily and Sardinia, and *traghetti* (smaller ferries) and *aliscafi* (hydrofoils) service the smaller islands. The main embarkation points for Sardinia are Genoa, Livorno, Civitavecchia and Naples; for Sicily the main points are Naples and Villa San Giovanni in Calabria. The main points of arrival in Sardinia are Cagliari, Arbatax, Olbia and Porto Torres; in Sicily they are Palermo and Messina.

For a comprehensive guide to all ferry services into and out of Italy, check out **Traghettonline** (www.traghettonline.com in Italian). The website lists every route and includes links to ferry companies, where you can buy tickets or search for deals.

Tirrenia Navigazioni (☎ 0810 171 998; www.tirrenia.it) services nearly all Italian ports. Other companies include Grandi Navi Veloci, Superfast, Ventouris and Montenegro Lines.

Detailed information on ferry companies, prices and times for Sicily can be found on p738, and for Sardinia on p813. For other

relevant destinations, see the Getting There & Away sections of individual chapters.

Many ferry services travel overnight and travellers can choose between cabin accommodation in a two- to four- person cabin or even a dorm, or a *poltrona*, which is an airline-type armchair. Deck class (which allows you to sit/sleep in the general lounge areas or on deck) is available only on some ferries. Almost all ferries carry vehicles.

BUS

Bus services within Italy are provided by numerous companies and vary from local routes meandering between villages to fast and reliable intercity connections. As a rule, buses are not always cheaper than the train, but can be invaluable getting to smaller towns.

It is usually possible to get bus timetables from local tourist offices. In larger cities most of the intercity bus companies have ticket offices or operate through agencies. In some villages and even good-sized towns, tickets are sold in bars or on the bus. Note that buses almost always leave on time.

Although it's usually not necessary to make reservations on buses, booking is advisable in the high season for overnight or long-haul trips.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

There is an excellent network of autostradas in Italy, represented on road signs by a white A followed by a number on a green background. The main north-south link is the Autostrada del Sole, which extends from Milan to Reggio di Calabria (called the A1 from Milan to Rome, the A2 from Rome to Naples and the A3 from Naples to Reggio di Calabria).

There's a toll to use most of Italy's autostradas. You can pay by cash or credit card as you leave the autostrada; to avoid lengthy queues buy a prepaid card (Telepass or Viacard) from banks and ACI offices in denominations of €25, €50 or €75, which you can use all over Italy. For information on road tolls and passes, contact **Autostrade per Italia** (☎ 800 26 92 69; www.autostrade.it in Italian).

However, off the beaten path you'll be doing most of your travelling on the larger system of *strade statali*. On maps they'll be represented by 'S' or 'SS' and can vary from four-lane highways (no tolls) to two-lane roads. These can be extremely slow, especially in mountainous regions. The third category

Motoring organisations in various countries have publications that detail road rules for foreign countries. If you get an IDP, it should also include a road rules booklet.

Some useful driving tips can be found at www.drivingabroad.co.uk.

HITCHING

Hitching is extremely uncommon in Italy. Public transport is surprisingly reliable (save for regular train and bus strikes) and most Italians would rather give up an arm than their car. This makes it quite easy to pick up rides once you've befriended a few *amici*, but hitchhikers could get stranded for hours and women would be extremely unwise to hitch.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

All the major cities have good transport systems, with bus and underground-train networks usually integrated. However, in Venice your only options are by *vaporetti* (small passenger ferries) or on foot.

Bus & Underground Trains

You must buy bus tickets before you board the bus and validate them once on board. If you get caught with an unvalidated ticket you will be fined on the spot (up to €50 in most cities).

There are *metropolitane* (underground systems) in Rome, Milan and Naples, as well as the new automated **MetroTorino** (www.metro.torino.it) in Turin, which is partially up and running. Again, you must buy tickets and validate them before getting on the train, with fines of up to €50 if you don't. You can get a map of the network from tourist offices in the relevant city.

Every city or town of any size has an efficient *urbano* (city) and *extraurbano* (inter-city) system of buses that reach even the most remote of villages. Call ahead if you want to travel on a Sunday, though, as many services come to a virtual halt.

Tickets can be bought from a *tabacconista* (tobacconist), newsstands, from ticket booths or dispensing machines at bus stations and in underground stations, and usually cost around €1. Most large cities offer good-value 24-hour or daily tourist tickets.

Taxi

You can usually find taxi ranks at train and bus stations or you can telephone for radio

taxi. It's best to go to a designated taxi stand, as it's illegal for them to stop in the street if hailed. If you phone a taxi, bear in mind the meter starts running from when you have called rather than when it picks you up.

With a minimum charge of €2.33 to €4.91, depending on the time of day or night, plus €0.78 per km, most short city journeys end up costing between €10 and €15. In Rome, once you go outside the ring road, it costs €1.29 per km. No more than four or five people are allowed in one taxi.

TRAIN

Trains in Italy are good value – relatively cheap compared with other European countries – and the better categories of train are fast and comfortable.

Trenitalia (☎ 800 89 20 21 in Italian; www.trenitalia.com) is the partially privatised, state train-system that runs most services. Other private Italian train lines are noted throughout this book.

There are several types of trains. Some stop at all stations, such as *regionale* or *interregionale* trains, while faster trains, such as the Intercity (IC) or the fast Eurostar Italia (ES), stop only at major cities. It is cheaper to buy all local train tickets in Italy.

Almost every train station in Italy has either a guarded left-luggage office or self-service lockers. The guarded offices are usually open 24 hours or from 6am to midnight. They charge around €3 per for each piece of luggage.

Classes & Costs

There are 1st and 2nd classes on most Italian trains; a 1st-class ticket costs just under double the price of a 2nd-class ticket.

To travel on Intercity and Eurostar trains you are required to pay a supplement (€3 to €16) determined by the distance you are travelling. On the Eurostar, the cost of the ticket includes the supplement and booking fee. If you are simply heading over a town or two, make sure you check whether your 40-minute journey requires a supplement. You might arrive 10 minutes earlier but pay €5 more for the privilege. Check up-to-date prices of routes on the Trenitalia website.

On overnight trips within Italy it can be worth paying extra for a *cuccetta* – a sleeping berth in a six- or four-bed compartment – which can cost just €20 more but save you the cost of a hotel.

Reservations

Reservations on trains are not essential but advisable, as without one you may not be able to find a seat on certain trains. Bookings can be made when you buy your ticket, and usually cost an extra €3. Reservations are obligatory for many of the Eurostar trains.

You can make train ticket bookings at most travel agencies, in many cases on the internet, or you can simply buy your ticket on arrival at the train station (allow plenty of time for this). There are special booking offices for Eurostar trains at some train stations.



Train Passes

Trenitalia offers its own passes for people travelling within Italy. These include the Cartaviaggio Smart, which is free and means you can then buy Ticket Sconto Smart, which has a 10% discount (25% discount for international tickets) for people aged from 12 to 26 years of age. If you get the Cartaviaggio Relax (free) and are over 60, you can buy Ticket Sconto Relax for €30 (free for the over 75s), with discounts of 15% on 1st- and 2nd-class tickets and 20% on couchettes. Children between four and 12 years are entitled to a 50% discount; those under four travel free. (For information on Eurail Passes, see p873.)

The Trenitalia Pass allows for four to 10 days of travel within any two-month period. Only available to nonresidents, passes may be bought from all major train stations or through a travel agent in your home country. Prices for different passes are detailed in the table below.

Category	4 days	6 days	8 days	10 days
1st class	€217	€261	€305	€349
2nd class	€174	€210	€246	€282
Youth (2nd class)	€145	€175	€205	€235
Groups (2nd class)	€149	€179	€209	€239

Health

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BEFORE YOU GO

While Italy has reasonable health care (although public hospitals tend to be less impressive the further south you travel), prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medication, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. If you are embarking on a long trip, make sure your teeth are OK (dental treatment is expensive in Italy) and take your optical prescription with you.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen (or from Switzerland, Norway or Iceland), a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) covers you for most medical care in public hospitals free of charge, but not for emergency repatriation home or nonemergencies. The card is available from health centres and (in the UK) from post-offices. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country

and Italy (Australia, for instance, has such an agreement; carry your Medicare card). If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are required to travel to Italy. The World Health Organization (WHO), however, recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, the measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as hepatitis B.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The WHO's publication *International Travel and Health* is revised annually and is available online at www.who.int/ith.

Other useful websites:

www.ageconcern.org.uk Advice on travel for the elderly.

www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk General travel advice for the layperson.

www.maristopes.org.uk Information on women's health and contraception.

www.mdtravelhealth.com Travel health recommendations for every country; updated daily.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during a plane flight, chiefly because of prolonged immobility (the longer the flight, the greater the risk).

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately.

To prevent the development of DVT on long-haul flights, you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting,

drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG

To avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

IN ITALY

AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE

If you need an ambulance anywhere in Italy, call ☎ 118. For emergency treatment, head straight to the *pronto soccorso* (casualty) section of a public hospital, where you can also get emergency dental treatment.

Excellent health care is readily available throughout Italy but standards can vary significantly. Pharmacists can give you valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medication for minor illnesses. They can also advise you when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction. In major cities you are likely to find English-speaking doctors or a translator service available.

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably in the form of an oral rehydration solution such as Dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS Bites, Stings & Insect-Borne Diseases

Italian beaches are occasionally inundated with jellyfish. Their stings are painful but not dangerous. Dousing in vinegar will deactivate any stingers that have not fired. Calamine lotion, antihistamines and analgesics may reduce the reaction and relieve pain.

Italy's only dangerous snake, the viper, is found throughout the country except on Sardinia. To minimise the possibilities of being bitten, always wear boots, socks and long trousers when walking through undergrowth where snakes may be present. Don't put your hands into holes and crevices, and be careful when collecting firewood. Viper bites do not cause instantaneous death and an antivenin

is widely available in pharmacies. Keep the victim calm and still, wrap the bitten limb tightly, as you would for a sprained ankle, and attach a splint to immobilise it. Seek medical help, if possible with the dead snake for identification. Don't attempt to catch the snake if there is a possibility of being bitten again. Tourniquets and sucking out the poison are now comprehensively discredited.

Always check all over your body if you have been walking through a potentially tick-infested area as ticks can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases such as Lyme disease and tick-borne encephalitis. If a tick is found attached, press down around the tick's head with tweezers, grab the head and gently pull upwards. Avoid pulling the rear of the body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents through the attached mouth parts into the skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease. Lyme disease begins with the spreading of a rash at the site of the bite, accompanied by fever, headache, extreme fatigue, aching joints and muscles, and severe neck stiffness. If untreated, symptoms usually disappear but disorders of the nervous system, heart and joints can develop later. Treatment works best early in the illness – medical help should be sought. Symptoms of tick-borne encephalitis include blotches around the bite, which is sometimes pale in the middle, and headaches, stiffness and other flu-like symptoms (as well as extreme tiredness) appearing a week or two after the bite. Again, medical help must be sought.

Rabies is still found in Italy but only in isolated areas of the Alps. Any bite, scratch or even lick from a mammal in an area where rabies does exist should be scrubbed with soap and running water immediately and then cleaned thoroughly with an alcohol solution. Medical help should be sought.

Leishmaniasis is a group of parasitic diseases transmitted by sandflies and found in coastal parts of Italy. Cutaneous leishmaniasis affects the skin tissue and causes ulceration and disfigurement; visceral leishmaniasis affects the internal organs. Avoiding sandfly bites by covering up and using repellent is the best precaution against this disease.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache,

dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heatstroke, drink water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. As ever, proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting it. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly, so carry waterproof garments, warm layers and a hat, and inform others of your route. Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless re-warming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Make sure children are up to date with routine vaccinations and discuss possible travel vac-

cines well before your departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* includes travel health advice for younger children.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in a woman's menstrual pattern.

If using oral contraceptives, remember that some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Condoms are readily available but emergency contraception is not, so take the necessary precautions.

Language

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Italian is a Romance language related to French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian. The Romance languages belong to the Indo-European group of languages, which includes English. Indeed, as English and Italian share common roots in Latin, you will recognise many Italian words.

Modern literary Italian began to develop in the 13th and 14th centuries, predominantly through the works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, who wrote chiefly in the Florentine dialect. The language drew on its Latin heritage and many dialects to develop into the standard Italian of today. Although many dialects are spoken in everyday conversation, standard Italian is the national language of schools, media and literature, and is understood throughout the country.

If you've managed to gain more than the most fundamental grasp of the language you will need to be aware that many older Italians still expect to be addressed by the third person polite, that is, *lei* instead of *tu*. Also, it is not considered polite to use the greeting *ciao* when addressing strangers, unless they use it first; it's better to say *buongiorno* (or *buona sera*, as the case may be) and *arrivederci* (or the more polite form, *arrivederla*). We have used the polite address for most of the phrases in this guide.

Use of the informal address is indicated by (inf). Italian also has both masculine and feminine forms (in the singular they often end in 'o' and 'a' respectively). Where both forms are given in this guide, they are separated by a slash, the masculine form first.

If you'd like a more comprehensive guide to the language, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Italian Phrasebook*.

PRONUNCIATION

Italian pronunciation isn't very difficult to master once you learn a few easy rules. Although some of the more clipped vowels and stress on double letters require careful practice for English speakers, it's easy enough to make yourself understood.

Vowels

Vowel sounds are generally shorter than English equivalents:

a	as in 'art', eg <i>caro</i> (dear); sometimes short, eg <i>amico/a</i> (friend)
e	short, as in 'let', eg <i>mettere</i> (to put); long, as in 'there', eg <i>mela</i> (apple)
i	short, as in 'it', eg <i>inizio</i> (start); long, as in 'marine', eg <i>vino</i> (wine)
o	short, as in 'dot', eg <i>donna</i> (woman); long, as in 'port', eg <i>ora</i> (hour)
u	as the 'oo' in 'book', eg <i>puro</i> (pure)

Consonants

The pronunciation of most Italian consonants is similar to that of their English counterparts. Pronunciation of some consonants depends on certain rules:

c	as the 'k' in 'kit' before a , o and u ; as the 'ch' in 'choose' before e and i
ch	as the 'k' in 'kit'
g	as the 'g' in 'get' before a , o , u and h ; as the 'j' in 'jet' before e and i
gli	as the 'lli' in 'million'
gn	as the 'ny' in 'canyon'
h	always silent
r	a rolled 'rr' sound
sc	as the 'sh' in 'sheep' before e and i ; as 'sk' before a , o , u and h
z	at the beginning of a word, as the 'dz' in 'adze'; elsewhere as the 'ts' in 'its'

Note that when **ci**, **gi** and **sci** are followed by **a**, **o** or **u**, the 'i' is not pronounced unless the accent falls on the 'i'. Thus the name 'Giovanni' is pronounced *joh-vahn-nee*.

A double consonant is pronounced as a longer, more forceful sound than a single consonant. This can directly affect the meaning of a word, eg *sono* (I am), *sonno* (sleep), but the context of a sentence will usually get the message across.

Word Stress

Stress is indicated in our pronunciation guide by italics. Word stress generally falls on the second-last syllable, as in *spa-ghet-ti*, but when a word has an accent, the stress falls on that syllable, as in *cit-tà* (city).

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...	<i>Cerco ...</i>	<i>cher-ko ...</i>
guesthouse	<i>una pensione</i>	<i>oo-na pen-syo-ne</i>
hotel	<i>un albergo</i>	<i>oon al-ber-go</i>
youth hostel	<i>un ostello per la gioventù</i>	<i>oon os-te-lo per la jo-ven-too</i>

Where is a cheap hotel?

<i>Dov'è un albergo a buon prezzo?</i>	<i>do-ve oon al-ber-go a bwon pre-tso</i>
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What is the address?

<i>Qual'è l'indirizzo?</i>	<i>kwa-le leen-dee-ree-tso</i>
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Could you write the address, please?

<i>Può scrivere l'indirizzo, per favore?</i>	<i>pwo skree-ve-re leen-dee-ree-tso per fa-vo-re</i>
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Do you have any rooms available?

<i>Avete camere libere?</i>	<i>a-ve-te ka-me-re lee-be-re</i>
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I'd like (a) ...	<i>Vorrei ...</i>	<i>vo-ray ...</i>
bed	<i>un letto</i>	<i>oon le-to</i>
single room	<i>una camera singola</i>	<i>oo-na ka-me-ra seen-go-la</i>
double room	<i>una camera matrimoniale</i>	<i>oo-na ka-me-ra ma-tree-mo-nya-le</i>
room with two beds	<i>una camera doppia</i>	<i>oo-na ka-me-ra do-pya</i>
room with a bathroom to share a dorm	<i>una camera con bagno un letto in dormitorio</i>	<i>oo-na ka-me-ra kon ba-nyo oon le-to een dor-mee-to-ryo</i>

How much is it ...?	<i>Quanto costa ...?</i>	<i>kwan-to ko-sta ...</i>
per night	<i>per la notte</i>	<i>per la no-te</i>
per person	<i>per persona</i>	<i>per per-so-na</i>

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for inclusion in letters, faxes and emails)

To ...	<i>A ...</i>
From ...	<i>Da ...</i>
Date	<i>Data</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Vorrei prenotare ... (see the list on this page for bed/room options)</i>
in the name of ...	<i>a nome di ...</i>
for the night/s of ...	<i>per la notte/le notti di ...</i>
credit card ...	<i>carta di credito ...</i>
number	<i>numero</i>
expiry date	<i>data di scadenza</i>
Please confirm availability and price.	<i>Prego confermare disponibilità e prezzo.</i>

May I see it?

<i>Posso vederla?</i>	<i>po-so ve-der-la</i>
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Where is the bathroom?

<i>Dov'è il bagno?</i>	<i>do-ve eel ba-nyo</i>
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I'm/We're leaving today.

<i>Parto/Partiamo oggi.</i>	<i>par-to/par-tya-mo o-jee</i>
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CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Buongiorno.</i>	<i>bwon-jor-no</i>
	<i>Ciao. (inf)</i>	<i>chow</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Arrivederci.</i>	<i>a-ree-ve-der-chee</i>
	<i>Ciao. (inf)</i>	<i>chow</i>
Yes.	<i>Sì.</i>	<i>see</i>
No.	<i>No.</i>	<i>no</i>
Please.	<i>Per favore/Per piacere.</i>	<i>per fa-vo-re/per pya-chay-re</i>
Thank you.	<i>Grazie.</i>	<i>gra-tsye</i>
That's fine/You're welcome.	<i>Prego.</i>	<i>pre-go</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Mi scusi.</i>	<i>mee skoo-zee</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>Mi scusi/Mi perdoni.</i>	<i>mee skoo-zee/mee per-do-nee</i>

What's your name?

<i>Come si chiama?</i>	<i>ko-me see kya-ma</i>
<i>Come ti chiami? (inf)</i>	<i>ko-me tee kya-mee</i>

My name is ...

<i>Mi chiamo ...</i>	<i>mee kya-mo ...</i>
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Where are you from?

<i>Da dove viene?</i>	<i>da do-ve vye-ne</i>
<i>Di dove sei? (inf)</i>	<i>dee do-ve se-ee</i>

I'm from ...

<i>Vengo da ...</i>	<i>ven-go da ...</i>
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I (don't) like ...

<i>(Non) Mi piace ...</i>	<i>(non) mee pya-che ...</i>
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Just a minute.*Un momento.* oon mo-men-to**DIRECTIONS****Where is ...?***Dov'è ...?* do-ve ...**Go straight ahead.***Si va sempre dritto.* see va sem-pre dee-ree-to*Vai sempre dritto.* (inf) va-ee sem-pre dee-ree-to**Turn left.***Giri a sinistra.* jee-ree a see-nee-stra**Turn right.***Giri a destra.* jee-ree a de-stra**at the next corner***al prossimo angolo* al pro-see-mo an-go-lo**at the traffic lights***al semaforo* al se-ma-fo-ro**SIGNS**

Ingresso/Entrata	Entrance
Uscita	Exit
Informazione	Information
Aperto	Open
Chiuso	Closed
Proibito/Vietato	Prohibited
Camere Libere	Rooms Available
Completo	Full/No Vacancies
Polizia/Carabinieri	Police
Questura	Police Station
Gabinetti/Bagni	Toilets
Uomini	Men
Donne	Women

behind	<i>dietro</i>	<i>dye-tro</i>
in front of	<i>davanti</i>	<i>da-van-tee</i>
far (from)	<i>lontano (da)</i>	<i>lon-ta-no (da)</i>
near (to)	<i>vicino (di)</i>	<i>vee-chee-no (dee)</i>
opposite	<i>di fronte a</i>	<i>dee fron-te a</i>
beach	<i>la spiaggia</i>	<i>la spya-ja</i>
bridge	<i>il ponte</i>	<i>eel pon-te</i>
castle	<i>il castello</i>	<i>eel kas-te-lo</i>
cathedral	<i>il duomo</i>	<i>eel dwo-mo</i>
island	<i>l'isola</i>	<i>lee-so-la</i>
(main) square	<i>la piazza</i> <i>(principale)</i>	<i>la pya-tsa</i> <i>(preen-chee-pa-le)</i>
market	<i>il mercato</i>	<i>eel mer-ka-to</i>
old city	<i>il centro</i> <i>storico</i>	<i>eel chen-tro</i> <i>sto-ree-ko</i>
palace	<i>il palazzo</i>	<i>eel pa-la-tso</i>
ruins	<i>le rovine</i>	<i>le ro-vee-ne</i>
sea	<i>il mare</i>	<i>eel ma-re</i>
tower	<i>la torre</i>	<i>la to-re</i>

EMERGENCIES**Help!***Aiuto!* a-yoo-to**There's been an accident!***C'è stato un incidente!* che sta-to oon een-chee-den-te**I'm lost.***Mi sono perso/a.* mee so-no per-so/a**Go away!***Lasciami in pace!* la-sha-mi een pa-che
Vai via! (inf) va-ee vee-a

Call ...!	<i>Chiami ...!</i>	<i>kee-ya-mee ...</i>
a doctor	<i>un dottore/</i> <i>un medico</i>	<i>oon do-to-re/</i> <i>oon me-dee-ko</i>
the police	<i>la polizia</i>	<i>la po-lee-tsee-ya</i>

HEALTH**I'm ill.** *Mi sento male.* mee sen-to ma-le
It hurts here. *Mi fa male qui.* mee fa ma-le kwee**I'm ...** *Sono ...* so-no ...
asthmatic *asmatico/a* az-ma-tee-ko/a
diabetic *diabetico/a* dee-a-be-tee-ko/a
epileptic *epilettico/a* e-pee-le-tee-ko/a**I'm allergic ...** *Sono ...* so-no ...
to antibiotics *allergico/a ...* a-ler-jee-ko/a ...
agli antibiotici a-lyee an-tee-bee-o-tee-chee
to aspirin *all'aspirina* a-la-spe-ree-na
to penicillin *alla penicillina* a-la-pe-nee-see-lee-na
to nuts *ai noci* a-ee no-chee**antiseptic** *antisettico* an-tee-se-tee-ko
aspirin *aspirina* as-pee-ree-na
condoms *preservativi* pre-zer-va-tee-vee
contraceptive *contraccettivo* kon-tra-che-tee-vo
diarrhoea *diarrea* dee-a-re-a
medicine *medicina* me-dee-chee-na
sunblock cream *crema solare* kre-ma so-la-re
tampons *tamponi* tam-po-nee**LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES****Do you speak English?***Parla inglese?* par-la een-gle-ze**Does anyone here speak English?***C'è qualcuno che parla inglese?* che kwal-koo-no ke par-la een-gle-ze**How do you say ... in Italian?***Come si dice ... in italiano?* ko-me see dee-che ... een ee-ta-ly-a-no**What does ... mean?***Che vuol dire ...?* ke vvol dee-re ...**I understand.***Capisco.* ka-pee-sko**I don't understand.***Non capisco.* non ka-pee-sko**Please write it down.***Può scriverlo, per favore?* pwo skree-ver-lo per fa-vo-re**Can you show me (on the map)?***Può mostrarmelo (sulla pianta)?* pwo mos-trar-me-lo (soo-la pyan-ta)**NUMBERS**

0	<i>zero</i>	<i>dze-ro</i>
1	<i>uno</i>	<i>oo-no</i>
2	<i>due</i>	<i>doo-e</i>
3	<i>tre</i>	<i>tre</i>
4	<i>quattro</i>	<i>kwa-tro</i>
5	<i>cinque</i>	<i>cheen-kwe</i>
6	<i>sei</i>	<i>say</i>
7	<i>sette</i>	<i>se-te</i>
8	<i>otto</i>	<i>o-to</i>
9	<i>nove</i>	<i>no-ve</i>
10	<i>dieci</i>	<i>dye-chee</i>
11	<i>undici</i>	<i>oon-dee-chee</i>
12	<i>dodici</i>	<i>do-dee-chee</i>
13	<i>treddici</i>	<i>tre-dee-chee</i>
14	<i>quattordici</i>	<i>kwa-tor-dee-chee</i>
15	<i>quindici</i>	<i>kween-dee-chee</i>
16	<i>sedici</i>	<i>se-dee-chee</i>
17	<i>diciassette</i>	<i>dee-cha-se-te</i>
18	<i>diciotto</i>	<i>dee-cho-to</i>
19	<i>diciannove</i>	<i>dee-cha-no-ve</i>
20	<i>venti</i>	<i>ven-tee</i>
21	<i>ventuno</i>	<i>ven-too-no</i>
22	<i>ventidue</i>	<i>ven-tee-doo-e</i>
30	<i>trenta</i>	<i>tren-ta</i>
40	<i>quaranta</i>	<i>kwa-ran-ta</i>
50	<i>cinquanta</i>	<i>cheen-kwan-ta</i>
60	<i>sessanta</i>	<i>se-san-ta</i>
70	<i>settanta</i>	<i>se-tan-ta</i>
80	<i>ottanta</i>	<i>o-tan-ta</i>
90	<i>novanta</i>	<i>no-van-ta</i>
100	<i>cento</i>	<i>chen-to</i>
1000	<i>mille</i>	<i>mee-le</i>
2000	<i>due mila</i>	<i>doo-e mee-la</i>

PAPERWORK

name	<i>nome</i>	<i>no-me</i>
nationality	<i>nazionalità</i>	<i>na-tsyo-na-lee-ta</i>
date/place of birth	<i>data/luogo di nascita</i>	<i>da-ta/lwo-go dee na-shae-ta</i>
sex (gender)	<i> Sesso</i>	<i>se-so</i>
passport	<i>passaporto</i>	<i>pa-sa-por-to</i>
visa	<i>visto</i>	<i>vee-sto</i>

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>Chi?</i>	<i>kee</i>
What?	<i>Che?</i>	<i>ke</i>
When?	<i>Quando?</i>	<i>kwan-do</i>
Where?	<i>Dove?</i>	<i>do-ve</i>
How?	<i>Come?</i>	<i>ko-me</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES**I'd like to buy ...***Vorrei comprare ...* vo-ray kom-pra-re ...**How much is it?***Quanto costa?* kwan-to ko-sta**I don't like it.***Non mi piace.* non mee pya-che**May I look at it?***Posso dare un'occhiata?* po-so da-re oo-no-ky-a-ta**I'm just looking.***Sto solo guardando.* sto so-lo gwar-dan-do**It's cheap.***Non è caro/cara.* non e ka-ro/ka-ra**It's too expensive.***È troppo caro/cara.* e tro-po ka-ro/ka-ra**I'll take it.***Lo/La compro.* lo/la kom-pro**Do you accept credit cards?** *Accettate carte di credito?* a-che-ta-te kar-te dee kre-dee-to**I want to change ... money travellers cheques** *Voglio cambiare ... del denaro* vo-lyo kam-bya-re ... del de-na-ro a-se-nyee dee viaggia vee-a-jo**more** *più* pyoo
less *meno* me-no
smaller *più piccolo/a* pyoo pee-ko-lo/la
bigger *più grande* pyoo gran-de**I'm looking for ...** *Cerco ...* cher-ko ...
a bank *un banco* oon ban-ko
the church *la chiesa* la kye-za
the city centre *il centro* eel chen-tro
the ... embassy *l'ambasciata di ...* lam-ba-sha-ta dee ...
the market *il mercato* eel mer-ka-to
the museum *il museo* eel moo-ze-o
the post office *la posta* la po-sta
a public toilet *un gabinetto* oon ga-bee-ne-to
the telephone *il centro* eel chen-tro
centre *telefonico* te-le-fo-nee-ko
the tourist office *l'ufficio di turismo* loo-fee-cho dee too-reez-mo

TIME & DATES

What time is it? It's (8 o'clock). *Che ore sono?* ke o-re so-no
Sono (le otto). so-no (le o-to)

in the morning *di mattina* dee ma-tee-na
in the afternoon *di pomeriggio* dee po-me-ree-jo
in the evening *di sera* dee se-ra
When? *Quando?* kwan-do
today *oggi* o-jee
tomorrow *domani* do-ma-nee
yesterday *ieri* ye-ree

Monday *lunedì* loo-ne-dee
Tuesday *martedì* mar-te-dee
Wednesday *mercoledì* mer-ko-le-dee
Thursday *giovedì* jo-ve-dee
Friday *venerdì* ve-ner-dee
Saturday *sabato* sa-ba-to
Sunday *domenica* do-me-nee-ka

January *gennaio* je-na-yo
February *febbraio* fe-bra-yo
March *marzo* mar-tso
April *aprile* a-pree-le
May *maggio* ma-jo
June *giugno* joo-nyo
July *luglio* loo-lyo
August *agosto* a-gos-to
September *settembre* se-tem-bre
October *ottobre* o-to-bre
November *novembre* no-vem-bre
December *dicembre* dee-chem-bre

TRANSPORT
Public Transport

What time does the ... leave/arrive? *A che ora parte/arriva ...?* a ke o-ra par-te/ a-ree-va ...

boat *la nave* la na-ve
(city) bus *l'autobus* low-to-boos
(intercity) bus *il pullman* eel pool-man
plane *l'aereo* la-e-re-o
train *il treno* eel tre-no

I'd like a ... ticket. *Vorrei un biglietto ...* vo-ray oon bee-lye-to ...
one way *di solo andata* dee so-lo an-da-ta
return *di andata e ritorno* dee an-da-ta e ree-toor-no
1st class *di prima classe* dee pree-ma kla-se
2nd class *di seconda classe* dee se-kon-da kla-se

I want to go to ... *Voglio andare a ...* vo-lyo an-da-re a ...

The train has been cancelled/delayed.

Il treno è soppresso/ in ritardo. eel tre-no e so-pre-so/ een ree-tar-do

the first *il primo* eel pree-mo
the last *l'ultimo* lool-tee-mo
platform (two) *binario (due)* bee-na-ryo (doo-e)
ticket office *biglietteria* bee-lye-te-ree-a
timetable *orario* o-ra-ryo
train station *stazione* sta-tsyo-ne

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a/an ... car 4WD *Vorrei noleggiare ... una macchina un fuoristrada* vo-ray no-le-ja-re ... oo-na ma-kee-na oon fwo-ree-stra-da
motorbike *una moto* oo-na mo-to
bicycle *una bici(cletta)* oo-na bee-chee-(kle-ta)

Is this the road to ...?

Questa strada porta a ...? kwe-sta stra-da por-ta a ...

Where's a service station?

Dov'è una stazione di servizio? do-ve oo-na sta-tsyo-ne dee ser-vee-tsyo

Please fill it up.

Il pieno, per favore. eel pye-no per fa-vo-re

I'd like (30) litres.

Vorrei (trenta) litri. vo-ray (tren-ta) lee-tree

diesel *gasolio/diesel* ga-zo-lyo/dee-zel
petrol/gasoline *benzina* ben-dzee-na

(How long) Can I park here?

(Per quanto tempo) Posso parcheggiare qui? (per kwan-to tem-po) po-so par-ke-ja-re kwee

Where do I pay?

Dove si paga? do-ve see pa-ga

ROAD SIGNS

Dare la Precedenza Give Way
Deviazione Detour
Divieto di Accesso No Entry
Divieto di Sorpasso No Overtaking
Divieto di Sosta No Parking
Entrata Entrance
Passo Carrabile/Carraio Keep Clear
Pedaggio Toll
Pericolo Danger
Rallentare Slow Down
Senso Unico One Way
Uscita Exit

I need a mechanic.

Ho bisogno di un meccanico. o bee-zo-nyo dee oon me-ka-nee-ko

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...).

La macchina/moto si è guastata (a ...). la ma-kee-na/mo-to see e gwas-ta-ta (a ...)

The car/motorbike won't start.

La macchina/moto non parte. la ma-kee-na/mo-to non par-te

I have a flat tyre.

Ho una gomma bucata. o oo-na go-ma boo-ka-ta

I've run out of petrol.

Ho esaurito la benzina. o e-zo-ree-to la ben-dzee-na

I've had an accident.

Ho avuto un incidente. o a-vo-o-to oon een-chee-den-te

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Is there a/an ...? C'è ...? che ...

I need a/an ... baby change room *Ho bisogno di ... un bagno con fasciatoio* o bee-zo-nyo dee ... oon ba-nyo kon fa-sha-to-yo

car baby seat *un seggiolino per bambini* oon se-jo-lee-no per bam-bee-nee

child-minding service *un servizio di babysitter* oon ser-vee-tsyo dee be-bee-see-ter

children's menu *un menù per bambini* oon me-noo per bam-bee-nee

(disposable) nappies/diapers *pannolini (usa e getta)* pa-no-lee-nee (oo-sa e je-ta)

formula (milk) (English-speaking) *latte in polvere un/una* la-te in pol-ve-re oon/oo-na

babysitter *babysitter (che parli inglese)* be-bee-see-ter (ke par-lee een-gle-ze)

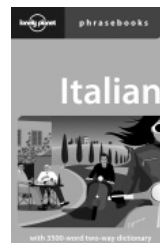
highchair *un seggiolone* oon se-jo-lo-ne

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?

Le dispiace se allatto il/la bimbo/a qui? le dees-pya-che se a-la-to eel/la beam-bo/a kwee

Are children allowed?

I bambini sono ammessi? ee bam-bee-nee so-no a-me-see



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Italian Phrasebook

Glossary

AAST – Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno e Turismo; city or town tourist office (mostly in southern Italy)

abbazia – abbey

ACI – Automobile Club Italiano (Italian Automobile Association)

acquacalda – hot spring (Sicily)

affittacamere – rooms for rent in private houses

agriturismo – tourist accommodation on farms; farm stays

AIIG – Associazione Italiana Albergatori per la Gioventù (Italian Youth Hostel Association)

al taglio – by the slice

albergo – hotel

alimentari – grocery shop; delicatessen

aliscafo – hydrofoil

Alleanza Nazionale – National Alliance; right-wing political party

alto – high

ambasciata – embassy

ambulanza – ambulance

anfiteatro – amphitheatre

aperitivi – before-meal drink and snack

APT – Azienda di Promozione Turistica; local town or city tourist office

autonoleggio – car hire

autostrada – motorway; highway

autunno – autumn

bambino – child

bancomat – ATM

battistero – baptistry

benzina – petrol

bianco – white

biblioteca – library

biglietto – ticket

biglietto cumulativo – a cumulative ticket that allows entrance to a number of associated sights

borgo – archaic name for small town, village or town sector (often dating to Middle Ages)

Brigate Rosse – BR; Red Brigades (terrorist group)

cambio – money-exchange office

camera – room

campanile – bell tower

campo – field; also a square in Venice

cappella – chapel

carabinieri – police with military and civil duties

Carnevale – carnival period between Epiphany and Lent

caruggio – dark, narrow alley (Liguria)

casa – house

castello – castle

cattedrale – cathedral

cena – evening meal

centro – city centre

centro storico – historic centre

certosa – monastery belonging to or founded by Carthusian monks

chiesa – church

chiostro – cloister; covered walkway, usually enclosed by columns, around a quadrangle

cima – summit

città – town; city

città alta – upper town

città bassa – lower town

colle – hill

colonna – column

comune – equivalent to a municipality or county; a town or city council; historically, a self-governing town or city

contrada – district

convalida – validation (eg of train ticket)

coperto – cover charge in restaurants

corso – main street

CTS – Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile; student/youth travel agency

cuccetta – couchette; bed in train carriage

cupola – dome

dammuso – house with thick whitewashed walls and a shallow cupola (on Pantellaria)

Democratici di Sinistra – DS; Left Democrats; political party

Democrazia Cristiana – DC; Christian Democrats;

former Italian political party

diretto – direct, slow train

discoteca – nightclub

doline – sinkhole created by collapsing caves; see foibe

douja – terracotta wine jug unique to Asti

duomo – cathedral

ENIT – Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo; Italian National Tourist Board

enoteca – wine bar

ES – Eurostar; very fast train

espresso – express mail; express train; short black coffee

est – east

estate – summer

faraglione – rock tower projecting out of water off the coast

fermo posta – poste restante (general delivery)

ferrovia – railway

fiesta – feast day; holiday

Feste di Pasqua – Easter Holy Week

fiume – river

foibe – sinkhole created by collapsing caves; see doline

fondaco – trading house and hotel (Venice)

fontana – fountain

fornaio – bakery

foro – forum

Forza Italia – Go Italy; political party

francobollo – postage stamp

frazione – municipal division

funicolare – funicular railway

funivia – cable car

gabinetto – toilets; WC

gasauto, GPL – liquid petroleum gas, LPG

gasolio – diesel

gelateria – ice-cream shop

giardino – gardens

golfo – gulf

grotta – cave

guardia forestale – forest ranger

IAT – Informazione e Assistenza ai Turisti; local tourist office

IC – Intercity; fast train

interregionale – long-distance train that stops frequently

inverno – winter

isola – island

IVA – Imposta di Valore Aggiunto; value-added tax

lago – lake

largo – small square

lavanderia – laundrette

Lega Nord – Northern League; political party

lido – beach

locanda – inn; small hotel

loggia – covered area on the side of a building; porch; lodge

lungomare – seafront road/promenade

mar, mare – sea

marito – husband

masseria – manor farm

mattanza – tuna slaughter

mercato – market

Metropolitana (Met) – the Rome and Naples underground transport systems

MM – Metropolitana Milano; Milan's underground transport system

monte – mountain

motorini – scooters

municipio – town hall

Natale – Christmas

necropoli – ancient name for cemetery or burial site

nord – north

nuraghe – megalithic stone fortress in Sardinia

osmizia – little roadside shack or house in which to drink wine, eat cheese and so on

ostello per la gioventù – youth hostel

osteria – simple, trattoria-style restaurant, usually with a bar

ovest – west

palazzo – mansion; palace; large building of any type, including an apartment block

palio – contest

parco – park

Partito Rifondazione Comunista – PRC; Refounded Communist Party; political party

passeggiata – traditional evening stroll

pasticceria – cake/pastry shop

pensione – guesthouse

permesso di lavoro – work permit

permesso di soggiorno – residency permit

piazza – square

piazzale – large open square

pietà – literally 'pity' or 'compassion'; sculpture, drawing or painting of the dead Christ supported by the Madonna

pinacoteca – art gallery

polena – statuette that graced the prows of vessels

polizia statale – state police

poltrona – airline-type chair on a ferry

ponte – bridge

porta – gate; door

portico – covered walkway, usually attached to the outside of buildings

porto – port

posta – post office; also *ufficio postale*

presepio – nativity scene; also *presepe*

primavera – spring

pronto soccorso – first aid, casualty

putto – cherub

quartiere – district

questura – police station

reale – royal

regionale – slow local train

rifugio – mountain hut; accommodation in the Alps

ristorante – restaurant

rocca – fortress

rosteria – shop selling roast meats, rotisserie

sala – room; hall

salumeria – delicatessen

santuario – sanctuary

sassi – literally ‘stones’; stone houses built in two ravines in Matera, Basilicata

scalinata – staircase

scavi – excavations

sci alpinismo – ski mountaineering

sci alpino – downhill skiing

sci di fondo – cross-country skiing

servizio – service charge in restaurants

sestiere – city district in Venice

settimana bianca – literally ‘white week’; winter-sports holiday

spiaggia – beach

stazione – station

stazione marittima – ferry terminal

strada – street; road

strada provinciale – main provincial road; sometimes just a country lane

strada statale – state highway, toll free and sometimes multilane

sud – south

superstrada – expressway; highway with divided lanes

tavola calda – literally ‘hot table’; pre-prepared meat, pasta and vegetable selection, often self-service

teatro – theatre

tempietto – small temple

tempio – temple

terme – thermal bath

tesoro – treasury

torre – tower

torrente – stream

traghetto – ferry

trattoria – simple restaurant

Trenitalia – Italian State Railways; used to be known as Ferrovie dello Stato (FS)

trullo – conical house in Perugia

ufficio postale – post office

ufficio stranieri – foreigners bureau

vaporetto – small passenger ferry (Venice)

vendemia – grape harvest

via – street; road

viale – avenue

vico – alley; alleyway

vigili del fuoco – fire brigade

vigili urbani – local police; traffic police

villa – townhouse; country house; also the park surrounding the house

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