



"KNOW BEFORE YOU GO" ITALY

Passports: A U.S. Passport valid for 6 months beyond your intended return date is required for travel. Your passport should have at least 2 empty visa pages. If you have not sent a copy of your passport to Carol's Travel Service please do so. This helps us in case of any emergencies. Without your passport you will be denied boarding of your flight.

Health: You must follow all health travel protocols in place for COVID-19 to enter Italy. Current information is shown on a separate sheet. Please check with your own physician for any health travel advice. They normally will want you to be up to date with your tetanus shot. Bring your own medications and pain reliever of choice (Tylenol, Aleve, etc.). Many doctors will recommend you bring Pepto-Bismol along for an upset stomach. Tap water in Italy may be safe to drink, however, we recommend drinking bottled water which may be offered as fizzy (gas) water or still water.

Currency: The monetary currency is the Euro which is divided as follows: Currency bills of 5, 10, 15, 100, 200, 500; coins of 1, 2, 5, 10 Euros, 20 and 50 cents. If you would like to have Euro's on you before departing the USA you can order them through your bank (most likely for a fee). For initial convenience, we recommend you bring approximately EUR100 cash with you from home. Tourists reaching Italy without foreign currency can obtain Euros through any bank or ATM machine. One of the best ways to get local currency is to use a debit card in an ATM. Usually the bank rate will be given for exchange rather than the local tourist rate. The ATM may give the option to charge your account in Euros or your home currency; select Euros to obtain the most preferential rate. It is advisable to keep receipts of currency exchanged in case it is necessary to reconvert Euros back into dollars before leaving the country. Always check with your bank before your departure to find out their fees and in case they have special instructions for your usage of an ATM in another country. Let them know the country you will be in, and the dates you will be there. Don't forget to include connecting airports. There are currency exchanges in the airport and towns of Italy, fees will vary but these are usually not the most economical.

It's handy to have a currency converter app on your mobile device and there are several to choose from in the App Store. If you want a printed copy of current currency conversion from USD to EUR or vice versa you can find a good chart on www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

Budgeting: To help you budget, food and drink often costs more than at home. The approximate cost of soft drinks, mineral water or coffee is EUR3-5; salad or sandwich with soda or water, EUR15 and upward; dinner at a mid-range restaurant with dessert and non-alcoholic beverage, EUR 20 and upward. You will need money for meals that are not included as well as beverages, local guide gratuities, shopping and incidental expenses. You might want to budget approximately EUR60 per day per person. It's a good idea to have plenty of EUR1, EUR2 and EUR5 with you. A good back up can be USD singles and fives. In a pinch you can use these for tips although they are not preferred and you will not be able to use them in shops and restaurants.

Credit Cards & Travelers Checks: Master Card, Visa and American Express are widely accepted. If bringing an American Express you may want to bring a second type of card in case an establishment does not accept American Express. Before you travel, be sure to let your bank know the country(s) that you may use your card in to avoid a fraud alert. You will need a PIN number for any ATM cards or to use a credit card for a cash withdrawal. Do not bring travelers checks, they are increasingly difficult to use.

Electricity: The electrical current in Italy is AC – the cycle is 220 volts 60 cycles. If you are carrying electrical appliances to Italy you will need to bring a converter (if your appliance is not dual voltage) and plug adapter with you. These may be purchased at most hardware stores, luggage sections of retail stores and Brookstone. They are also widely available for on line purchase. Your hotels do have blow dryers in their guest rooms.



Grounded adapter



Non-grounded adapter www.magellans.com

Calling Home: Check in advance with your cell phone service provider to make sure you can use it in Italy . Most service providers will let you convert your phone to an international plan for short amounts of time or sell you a SIM card. Upon arrival in Italy, you can also purchase a calling card which can be used at public phones.

Weather: September and October are a beautiful time to be in Italy (Sicily). September has an average high temperature of 82F and low of 68F; October has an average high of 74F and low of 62F. Take along a portable umbrella in case showers develop.

Packing/Baggage: Be sure to label your luggage both inside and outside with your name and phone number. Your tour allows one check-in piece of luggage per person due to capacity on the motor coach. You are also allowed one soft sided carry on; a carry on with wheels will not be allowed on the motor coach. Therefore, we suggest that you pack lightly and save some room or bring a collapsible carry on that you can put your souvenirs in.

To save room in your suitcase, wear a light fall jacket during your flight in case you find the plane cool. A pair of comfortable, worn in walking shoes are a must for days out and a comfortable pair of evening shoes are recommended. To minimize the amount of clothing needed, consider packing dark colored bottoms that can be worn more than once. You can pack up to two tops for each day; one for your day time touring and one for your evening out. Evening out tops can be worn more than once and often day time tops can be as well. Bring clothing that can be layered to help with temperature variances. Today's savvy traveler packs light and easy!

If you must have washcloths you might want to pack a couple as not every hotel in Italy has washcloths. Hint, pick up a pack of cheap cloths at a discount store – and leave them behind.

Airline Baggage Information: Most airlines allow you to check one bag free on international flights with the following restrictions. Calculate the size limits of your checked bag by adding the total outside dimensions of your bag including width, height, and length. Your checked baggage allowance usually is; Dimension: 62in/158cm; Weight: 50lbs/23kgs. You usually can bring 1 carry-on bag and 1 personal item as follows:

Your carry-on bag usually is: Up to 45 inches (22 x 14 x 9 in) or 115 centimeters (23 x 36 x 56 cm) including handles and wheels; able to fit comfortably into the sizer box provided at the airport. Your personal item must be smaller than your carry-on, able to fit under the seat in front of you and can include: a purse, a briefcase, a laptop bag, or similar items such as a tote.

Please check on your air carriers web site for exact details, rates and restrictions for checked and carryon luggage. Visit the TSA web site for their rules on what is allowed in your carryon bags. www.tsa.gov

Time Zone: In terms of standard time zones, Italy is 7 hours ahead of our Central Time in the United States and 6 hours ahead of our Eastern Time.

Safety: The violent crime rate in Italy is generally low. Make use of the hotel safe and leave non-essential valuables and money locked up. It is recommended to keep your passport, credit cards, travel documents, and money separately from each other. To protect against pick pocketing, keep your money hidden, preferably in an inside pocket or money belt. Keep a copy of your passport in a separate area or on your phone as a picture.

Tax Refund/Tax Free Shopping: After visiting Italy, non-European tourists can apply for a tax refund on goods bought within the country. A sales tax (VAT) of 22% is added on to most goods and services in Italy. Most countries offering a tax refund specify a minimum amount that must be spent in a particular shop to claim a refund. In Italy, the minimum purchase to qualify for a refund is EUR155, in one shop. To learn how to reclaim tax visit one of the many web sites that will give you this information such as <https://upon.io/vat/countries/italy>.

Alternatively, you can purchase goods from shops participating in “Europe Tax-free Shopping” program. Simply show your passport when you make a purchase and you will be given a Tax-free Shopping Cheque showing the refund you are owed. As you leave the country, customs officials will stamp your cheques. They may want to see the merchandise so don’t pack it in checked luggage. You can claim your refund from the Europe Tax-free Shopping desk or have it sent to you.

Tippling Guidelines: Tips in Italy are at will, but are expected. If the service you have experienced has not been up to your expectations there is no need for you to leave a tip. On the other hand, if you have been fully satisfied with the services provided the following is a tipping guideline.

Taxis:	Round up to the next 1-2EUR figure
Restaurants:	10%
Luggage:	1-2 Euros per piece - yours are included during the Gals Gone Traveling tour at hotels but not at airports
Tour Guide:	5-8 Euros per full day - yours are included during the Cooper’s Hawk tour for the official tour guide and driver. LOCAL GUIDE gratuities cannot be collected in advance. 1-3EUR is a customary tip for a local guide who does a couple hours to half day tour with you.
Driver:	2-4 Euros per day – yours are included during the Cooper’s Hawk tour

Language: In the larger cities of Italy and even smaller towns that cater to tourists, it should be fairly easy to get by speaking English. However, it is always useful to know some basic phrases in Italian. Here are a few!

- Thank you = Grazie.
- Thank you very much = Grazie tante.
- You're welcome = Prego.
- Please = Per favore.
- Yes = Sì.
- No = No.
- Excuse me = Mi scusi.
- I'm sorry = Mi dispiace.
- I don't understand = Non capisco.
- I don't speak Italian = Non parlo italiano.
- Do you speak English = Parla inglese
- Where is the bathroom = Dov'è la toilette