



Italy Country Guide

elevate destinations

Welcome to Italy!

In this document, you will find information that will be useful during your journey to Italy. The information listed in this guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips, health and safety recommendations, and so much more. Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight information, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate staff member.

Table of Contents

Know Before You Go	3
Passport	3
Visa	3
Medical and Travel Insurance	3
Immunizations	4
Other Health Considerations	4
Medications	5
Safety Recommendations	5
Communications	6
Essential Travel Documents	7
Money	7
In-country Info	8
Time	8
Electricity	9
Water & Food Safety	9
Waste Disposal	10
Local Cuisine	10
Weather Conditions	11
Cultural Considerations	11
Language	12
Photography	12
Human Trafficking in Travel	13
Responsible Travel Tips	13

Know Before You Go

Passport

Travelers to Italy should ensure that their passports are valid for at least six months beyond the end of their intended stay and have at least two blank (unstamped) pages available for visas and immigration stamps. Note that some countries do not accept amendment pages for visas or entry stamps. If your passport is running low on blank pages or nearing expiration, it's advisable to renew it well in advance of your trip to avoid any complications.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Have electronic and paper copies of your passport in case something happens to it while you are traveling.

- Scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself.
- Take a photo of your passport and save it to your phone in an "Important Documents" photo album. Leave a scanned copy of your passport with friends and family at home.

Visa & Entry Procedures

European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS): Many countries, including the United States, are not required to obtain a visa to enter Italy for 90 days or less. However, starting in 2025, many of these countries, including, U.S. citizens are required to apply for and obtain a travel authorization to enter Italy. This new procedure is called the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), and requires an online application and a fee of approximately \$8 USD. To see what countries are required to obtain the ETIAS, visit

https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/who-should-apply_en

Once an ETIAS is approved, the authorization is good for a 90-day stay, however, it does not guarantee entry. When you arrive, a border guard will ask to see your passport and other documents and verify that you meet the entry conditions. You can read more about the ETIAS [here](#).

When filling out the application, you will be asked to provide the following information:

- Personal information including your name(s), surname, date and place of birth, nationality, home address, parents' first names, email address, and phone number;
- Travel document details;
- Details about your level of education and current occupation;
- Details about your intended travel and stay in any of the countries requiring ETIAS;

- Details about any criminal convictions, any past travels to war or conflict zones, and whether you have recently been subject of a decision requiring you to leave the territory of any country.

When the ETIAS system is launched, check your online trip portal for more information.

Italian Visas: Some countries are required to obtain a visa for Italy. To find out if your country requires an Italian Visa, go to <https://vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en>. If you are required to obtain a visa, find the full instructions on how to apply using this website using the reason for stay as “tourism.” Elevate Destinations will provide you with proof of accommodation which is required for the application.

You will need to first fill out the online form, print it out, and then bring it in person to an Italian Representation Office for approval. The visa typically takes around 15-30 days to process so it is recommended to apply no later than 30 days before your departure to avoid any potential processing delays.

Medical and Travel Insurance

Elevate Destinations will purchase medical insurance and emergency evacuation coverage for you, valid from March 13 – 21, 2025. This policy covers the following:

- Accident / Sickness Medical Expense Maximum \$ 500,000.00
- Deductible \$ 0.00 / All Cause
- Co-Insurance The plan will pay 100% up to the policy max.
- Emergency Medical Evacuation Maximum \$ 200,000.00
- Return of Mortal Remains \$ 10,000.00
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment \$ 10,000.00
- Political; Natural Disaster Evacuation \$ 10,000.00 / \$50,000 aggregate
- Pre-Existing Condition Exclusion 1 Year
- Personal Property \$ 100.00 maximum
- 24-Hour Assistance Included

You will receive details of this insurance plan in a brochure and it will be linked on the online trip portal.

This coverage does not include trip cancellation or interruption benefits and also does not cover pre- or post-trip days of travel booked outside of Elevate Destinations. We strongly suggest you purchase additional coverage to cover your non-refundable expenses in the event you need to cancel your trip or have additional expenses incurred on the trip.

Elevate and Rotary strongly recommend purchasing Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (CFAR) to cover trip-related expenses. Please note that some CFAR insurance options are time-sensitive. Please be ready to purchase an insurance policy within 14 days of making your first trip payment. Below are two vendors we recommend, however, you are free to purchase a policy from any vendor of your choosing.

1. USI Travel Insurance Services
Email: info@travelinsure.com
Phone Number: (800) 937-1387
2. Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennen)
Email: dan@travelinsurancecenter.com
Phone Number: (402) 343-3621

Elevate Destinations is not equipped to answer specific questions on insurance. Please contact the insurance broker or company for specific information.

Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Italy. Given that we are not a licensed healthcare provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may or may not need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Check health advisory websites for Italy, such as the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) (U.S. based) or your own country's government travel advisory portal, to find information on recommended vaccines, medications, regional travel health notices, and tips for staying safe and healthy during your trip.

Other Health Considerations

In general, we recommend a moderate level of physical agility. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires participants to:

- Walk at least one mile without difficulty on uneven surfaces
- Spend extended periods of time on their feet
- Climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Keep pace with an active group of travelers

- Spend time outside in weather that can be hot in the summer and cold and rainy in the winter
- Flexible and positive attitude in the case of sudden changes to the itinerary or weather—expect the unexpected!

Medications

Always travel with medications in their original, clearly labeled containers and in your carry-on luggage. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity and keep these handy when entering or exiting any of Italy's borders.

Elevate Destinations also recommends that all travelers make and print a list of medications and any existing health conditions to bring on their trip. You may choose to carry this on your person or give it to your guide. Having this list could be life-saving in the unlikely case of an emergency.

Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- If you have time-sensitive medication including epi-pens and inhalers, keep them on you at all times.
- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all times. Keep bags in front of you in crowds and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention and avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.
- If you are a U.S. citizen, we encourage you to [register with STEP](#) (see below). If you are not a U.S. citizen, we encourage you to register with your home country's government traveler program if applicable.

Smart Traveler Tip!

If you are a U.S. citizen, we recommend that you sign-up for the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Enrolling in this program allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip and has enormous benefits in case of an emergency:

- You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

Communications

Wi-Fi: In most hotels in Italy, Wi-Fi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability are typically good but may be less reliable than you are used to. Often, the connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in the rooms.

International Calls: If you are in Italy and trying to reach a number in the U.S., dial 00 before dialing the country code for the U.S. (+1) + local number.

The country code for Italy is +39. If you are in the U.S. and trying to call Italy, dial 011 + 39 + local number.

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smartphone apps:** WhatsApp is the most widely used app for communicating (works on both Wi-Fi and cellular). Remember to download the app *before* you travel (to download, click [here](#))!
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges, or check if your phone plan automatically covers you in the region. You can also contact your phone provider to purchase an international package for the dates you will be traveling.
3. **Use a local phone / SIM card:** This is a good option for making calls within Italy as international calls can get expensive. Local SIM cards are inexpensive, can be found at a variety of stores, and often have pay-as-you-go plans where you can “top up” your credit for use in the country. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). This will change your phone number for the duration of time you have a foreign SIM card in your phone.

Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to record all of your important information on one sheet of paper, photocopy it, and distribute a few copies in your luggage and among relatives or friends at home. Also, email a scanned copy to yourself. Take a photo of these documents and save them in an “important travel document” photo folder on your phone so that you can access these documents electronically.

These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:

- Passport - original and photocopy
- Visa or travel authorization documentation as applicable

- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Address and phone numbers of the hotels where you are staying
- Medical/travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Evacuation insurance ID card (provided to you by Elevate Destinations)
- Emergency Contact List (provided to you by Elevate Destinations)
- Contact information of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- List of current medical needs and medications in case of an emergency

Money

The local currency in Italy is the Euro (€). Generally speaking, credit cards are the preferred form of payment. Click [here](#) to see the current exchange rate. Please note the following denominations below:

- **Bank Notes:** €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200, €500
- **Coins:** 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, €1, €2

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Italy can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMs, hotels, banks, and foreign exchange bureaus). In general, we suggest that you limit the amount of money you convert into local currencies and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving any foreign country. Euro is easily available outside of Europe, so you can either convert money before you leave or in the country. However, ATMs often offer the best rates. Save all receipts from your currency exchange transactions. If you plan to exchange USD cash, the bills must be:

- New (printed in the last 5 years)
- In pristine condition (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)
- Larger denominations (\$50 and \$100 bills attract the best exchange rate)

For your extra personal costs and shopping, \$50-100 US per day is a good rule of thumb.

ATM/Debit Cards: You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs. If you are paying merchants using your debit card, they will often ask for the PIN number.

- **Note:** We recommend traveling with 1-3 crisp \$100 bills in your carry-on luggage to exchange in the case that ATMs are not working for you as well as some smaller denomination bills for gratuity and other small exchanges.

Change: Ask for smaller bills when you change money, or use your large bills at large shops to receive more change. In many cases, people (local vendors especially) don't have change.

Credit Cards: Credit cards (Visa or MasterCard preferred) are acceptable almost everywhere in Italy. Please note American Express and Discover cards are not commonly accepted.

Gratuities: Please check your online trip portal to find which gratuities are and are not covered in your trip cost. We recommend tipping your porters at the hotels and leaving behind cash in your room for the cleaning staff. For porters, about \$2-5 Euro per bag is appropriate. For cleaning staff, we recommend leaving behind about \$2-5 Euro per day. Please leave a tip for housekeeping each day because there may be different staff cleaning your room each day.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure you remember your ATM PIN numbers to withdraw cash at your destination.

Most banks and credit card companies do not flag international use as unusual, but if you use a more local bank it would be wise to notify them of your travel plans.

In-country Info

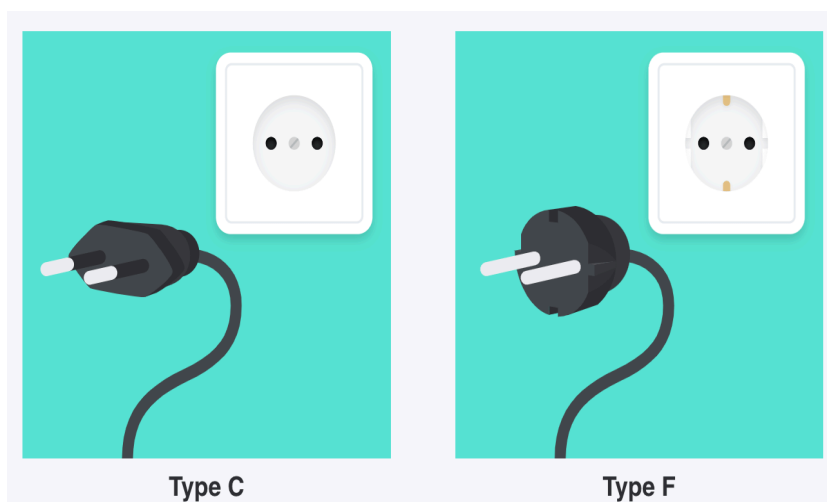
Time

Italy is in the Central European time zone (CET), which follows European Daylight Saving Time. In comparison to the United States:

- March 30 - October 31, 2025 (Central European Summer Time & US Daylight Savings): Italy is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Time (ET), 7 hours ahead of Central Time (CT), and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Time (PT).
- November 1 - March 29, 2026 (Central European Time & US Daylight Savings): Italy is 5 hours ahead of Eastern Time (ET), 6 hours ahead of Central Time (CT), and 8 hours ahead of Pacific Time (PT).

Electricity

Italy uses a standard of 230V, 50Hz, and plug types C and F. To keep your electronics up and running, we suggest purchasing a universal plug or adapter. Because the voltage in Italy is 230V and the U.S. is 100-120V, you may need a voltage converter for any small appliances you plan on bringing, such as a CPAP machine. This would not include phone chargers, as they usually have an internal converter.



Smart Traveler Tip!

Download a conversion app, such as [Units Plus](#), for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling.

Water & Food Safety

Tap water is safe to drink in Italy unless otherwise mentioned by your guide.

Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water. Clean drinking water and optional drinks will be supplied at all meals and water will be available in the vehicle(s).

Waste Disposal

Keep in mind that much of the world's waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. To minimize your impact, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace. Everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room).
- Avoid packing with plastic bags and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags.
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill.
- Remove the packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

Local Cuisine

Italian cuisine is celebrated for its simplicity, fresh ingredients, and vibrant flavors. Known worldwide for pasta, pizza, olive oil, and wines, Italian food offers a delicious balance of hearty dishes and lighter fare. Each region in Italy contributes its own specialties, creating a diverse culinary landscape. Italian meals are often a communal experience, emphasizing the enjoyment of food with family and friends.

A glass of wine typically accompanies Italian meals, with each region offering its own celebrated varieties. Espresso is a staple of Italian life and is often enjoyed after a meal. For something refreshing, try a sparkling water or an iconic Italian soda like chinotto, made from a type of citrus fruit.

Here are some traditional Italian dishes you might savor during your travels:

- **Spaghetti alla Carbonara:** A Roman pasta dish made with eggs, cheese, pancetta, and pepper.
- **Lasagna:** Layered pasta with rich meat ragu, béchamel sauce, and cheese, often baked until bubbly and golden.
- **Risotto:** A creamy rice dish cooked slowly with broth, cheese, and often seafood or mushrooms.
- **Pizza Margherita:** The classic Naples-style pizza, topped with tomato, mozzarella, fresh basil, and a drizzle of olive oil.
- **Ossobuco:** Braised veal shanks cooked slowly in a savory broth of wine, vegetables, and herbs.
- **Tiramisu:** A coffee-flavored dessert made with layers of mascarpone cheese, cocoa, and ladyfingers soaked in espresso.

Weather Conditions

Italy's Mediterranean climate varies by region. Summers (June-August) are hot, especially in the south and along the coast, while northern and mountainous areas remain milder. Winters (December-February) are mild in the south but colder in the north, with snow common in the mountains.

Spring (March-May) and fall (September-November) offer ideal travel conditions with moderate temperatures and fewer crowds, though occasional rain is possible. These seasons are often considered the most pleasant for exploring Italy, with blooming landscapes in spring and vibrant foliage in autumn.

Elevate Destinations will provide you with a suggested Packing List that has more specifics on the weather in Italy for the dates of your trip.

Cultural Considerations

Experiencing different cultures and ways of life is one of the joys of traveling. Below are some major elements of daily life, culture, and customs in Italy that you may experience.

- **Demographics:** Italy has a population of around 60 million people, with the majority living in urban areas, particularly in cities like Rome, Milan, and Naples. The population is aging, with one of the highest life expectancies in Europe and a low birth rate. Ethnically, Italy is predominantly Italian, though immigration has introduced growing communities from

countries like Romania, Albania, and Morocco. The country is largely Roman Catholic, but religious diversity is increasing with the rise of Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and other minority faiths. Italian is the official language, but regional dialects and languages like Sardinian and German are also spoken.

- **Tipping:** Not expected, but rounding up the bill is appreciated.
- **LGBTQ+ Rights:** LGBTQ+ people are affected by laws and policies around the world. In Italy, LGBTQ+ rights in Italy have improved, with same-sex civil unions legal since 2016, though same-sex marriage and adoption rights remain limited. Public attitudes are more accepting in urban areas, while conservative views persist, especially in rural regions. For more information on LGBTQ+ rights and tools for LGBTQ+ travelers going to Italy, [click here](#).
- **Social Norms:** In Italy, social norms emphasize warmth, politeness, and respect for tradition. Family is central to Italian culture, and gatherings often revolve around meals, where conversation is lively and unhurried. Greetings among friends often include kisses on both cheeks, while formal language and punctuality are important in professional settings. Dress is another key aspect, as Italians take pride in their appearance, favoring stylish, well-groomed outfits.
- **Greetings:** When meeting someone for the first time or in a professional setting, a handshake is customary. Among friends and family, it's typical to exchange a light kiss on both cheeks, starting with the right.
- **Scams:** It is good practice to look out for scams while traveling, especially around tourist areas and big cities. It's pretty easy to avoid if you know what to look out for. Be vigilant. Here are some tips to avoid theft and scams:
 - When walking, always wear your backpack in front. Wear your purse across your body and place your hand over the zipper area in front as you walk.
 - Carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times. If a police officer (or anyone, for that matter) asks to see it, say that your passport is at the consulate and offer to give them the photocopy instead. Police sometimes try to bribe tourists by taking their passports and demanding money to give them back.

Language

Italian is the official language of Italy and is known for its melodic and expressive qualities. While standard Italian is spoken nationwide, many regions also have distinct dialects, and some areas, like South Tyrol, have minority languages such as German.

We recommend practicing the below phrases. People will appreciate you attempting to speak in their language!

English Phrase	Italian
Hello / Goodbye	Ciao
Good morning	Buongiorno
Good evening	Buonasera
Please	Per favore
Thank you	Grazie
You're welcome	Prego
Excuse me / I'm sorry	Mi scusi
How much does it cost?	Quanto costa?

Photography

Italy is a beautiful country, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first. This is a sign of respect, as the subjects of your photos have the autonomy to consent. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate.

Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. There are some places where photography is prohibited; these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you would like some tips on ethical photography practices, check out our blog post, "[Nine questions to help decolonize your photography.](#)"

Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed [The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism](#) (The Code) and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A "child" is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email protect@ecpat.net to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate's values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at www.elevatedestinations.com. Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that maintaining truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners who share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Native Energy's Carbon Calculator](#).

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes, or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with a shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture, or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.

- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible. Check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Tip your housekeeping staff:** Many of the staff cleaning hotel rooms are at the bottom of the economic pyramid. Please consider leaving a tip before you check out. The equivalent of \$2-5 a day is appropriate. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible and enjoy the moment as things can change when traveling. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.