



Traveling to Italy

Preparing to Go

Travel Document Requirements – You will need a passport valid for six months beyond the completion of your journey for entry into Italy. It is recommended that you make at least two photocopies of your passport. Secure one set of copies in the safe in your room while traveling and leave one set behind someone at home who will assist you in the event your documents are misplaced, lost, or stolen.

ATM and Credit Cards – It is recommended that you contact your bank in advance of departing on this tour to determine whether you will be able to use your ATM and credit cards while traveling. When contacting your bank, notify them of your travel dates so that they will anticipate charges being made outside of the country. It is also recommended that you make a photocopy of the front and back sides of your ATM and credit cards to leave behind with someone at home.

Clothing and Packing – When packing for your trip to Italy, it is important to keep in mind the time of year you are traveling and the current weather conditions for that time. The weather in Italy is temperate and unpredictable. Dress for comfort and convenience with a wardrobe that is adaptable and allows for layering. Most Catholic churches in Italy require that your knees and shoulders be covered when you enter.

It is recommended that you pack an adequate supply of your prescription medication in its original container to last through your entire journey, together with a copy of your doctor's prescription, a list of the generic names of your medication, your travel documents, and a change of clothing in your carry-on bag to avoid any inconvenience in the event your flight or luggage is delayed.

Suggestions for items to pack for your journey to Italy:

- Casual, comfortable clothing – capris, slacks, skirt, dress,
- long and short sleeved shirts, sweater, light jacket
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, hat
- Swimwear
- Rain poncho and travel umbrella
- Lightweight, comfortable, sturdy walking shoes and sandals
- Camera, batteries, memory cards, battery charger
- Battery-operated travel alarm clock
- Medicine and toiletries that may be difficult to find en route
- Copies of your travel documents
- Money belt to wear under your clothing
- Electrical converter and adapter

Health – To enjoy this tour, you should be in good health and able to walk reasonable distances, often over unpaved and uneven surfaces. The amount of walking you do, however, is at your discretion.

Check with your health insurance provider to determine whether you are covered while traveling. In most cases, any needed health care will be prepaid by credit card and then reimbursed by your health insurance provider or travel insurance policy.

No vaccinations are currently required for travel to Italy. However, you should be current with your tetanus, polio, and measles vaccines. Hepatitis A and B vaccinations are highly recommended. The water in Italy is safe to drink.

Luggage – Due to airline policies and for ease of travel, it is recommended that you limit your luggage to one medium size check-in suitcase and one small size carry-on bag. For day-to-day travel, it is recommended that you limit your handbag/backpack to a small, soft-sided piece, and that you bring only those items you need handy during the day such as medication, camera, guidebook, etc.

Destination Information

Air Conditioning – All the hotels and vans used on this tour are air-conditioned. European air conditioning in hotels should be considered as a climate-control system; most have three settings for the fan, plus a “cool” setting. Very few of the European systems actually have a temperature setting. In general, the amount of cool air that is produced from a European air-conditioning system may be less than what you may have in your own home.

Cell Phones – Contact your cell phone carrier to determine whether your cell phone service extends to Italy. Many carriers have an international plan for travelers.

Currency and Exchange Rates – The official currency in Italy is the Euro. Most establishments will accept major credit cards. The ATM's in Italy are known as Bancomats, and they are widespread. Using a credit card, debit card, or ATM card is very easy. Bancomats will dispense Euro. It is recommended that you use your regular ATM card and simply withdraw money from your account as needed. Check with your bank before leaving on your trip to make sure your card will work at a Bancomat.

To obtain the most current rates for the Euro and the Dollar, log on to oanda.com.

Customs and Tax-Free Shopping – You are not permitted to bring live plants, fresh fruits and other produce into Italy. Italy levies a Value Added Tax (VAT) on consumer goods and services. Since you are not a resident of the country in which the purchase is made, you may be entitled to a VAT refund and should inquire about the refund policy where you shop. At the end of your trip, you are entitled to a duty-free exemption based on the total value of merchandise purchased in Italy as long as you physically bring it with you.

Electrical Current – The electrical current in Italy is 230V, 50 Hz, AC. If your electrical devices do not conform to this standard, you will need to bring the appropriate converters and adapters.

Hotels – All of the hotels on this tour are located in historic buildings in the city center within walking distance to the major sights. European hotel rooms tend to be smaller and with less light than rooms you are used to in U.S. hotels.

Internet Access – The hotels on this itinerary offer internet access, most for a small fee. There are also computers available for guests to use at most of the hotels.

Safety – Italy is safe when it comes to violent crime, but thieves target tourists and pick-pocketing and bag-snatching attempts are common. Be aware of your surroundings at all times and watch out for commotions that may be an attempt to catch you off guard. At train stations, be alert at stops as you get on and off and are maneuvering your luggage. Wear a money belt (a small, zippered fabric pouch that fastens around the waist under your pants or around your neck under your shirt). Keep all essential documents in your money belt and just enough money that you need for the day in your pockets or handbag.

Time Zone – Italy is 9 hours ahead of California time.

Tipping – Italy is not a big tipping culture. Here are some general guidelines:
Restaurants: the service is included in the bill, but add another 5 – 10% directly to the waiter if the service is exceptional
Taxi drivers: round up to the higher fare
Hotel housekeeper: 1 euro per day
Hotel bellman: 1 euro for help with luggage

Transportation – We will travel first class by high-speed train between cities with private van transfers to and from the airports and train stations.

Rome to Florence – direct train (1.5 hours)
Florence to Venice – direct train (2 hours)
Venice to Milan – direct train (2.5 hours)
Milan to Bellagio – private van (1.5 hours)
Bellagio to Milan – private van (1.5 hours)

Weather – The weather in Italy is temperate and unpredictable. The average high and low temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit) and rainfall in June are:

	<u>Temperature</u>	<u>Average Rainfall</u>
Rome	82 / 60	2.5 in
Florence	85 / 59	2.9 in
Venice	78 / 58	3.0 in
Bellagio	82 / 58	6.0 in
Milan	80 / 60	2.9 in



