

Transportation

How to get around the Belpaese

A vacation in Italy is a total sensory and cultural immersion, a series of experiences and memories to last a lifetime. Traveling to and around the country is much easier than one might think. There is a myth that Italian drivers are crazy...untrue! They are certainly aggressive, but they are also very skilled. When you first arrive in Italy everything looks different. The cars are very small, the streets are very narrow, everything looks like it is going at super-fast speed and you are in slow motion. This may happen because of jet-lag but, honestly, things are rather different there.

Airports



Once you have arrived at your final destination, you need to decide how you are going to get around.

BUT FIRST LET'S FRESHEN UP ON SOME VOCABULARY:

Train	Treno
Train Station	Stazione Ferroviaria
Taxi	Taxi
Bus	Autobus
Subway	Metropolitana
Car	Macchina
Rental Car	Autonoleggio
Bus Stop	Fermata dell'Autobus
Airport	Aereoporto

Italy is simply loaded with treasures, so it is not hard to see why Italy is one of the world's most heavily visited countries; it is for this reason Italy has many international airports.

The country has 133 airports, all located outside of the city, but they offer transportation, shut-

tle buses and trains, that for a small fee will take you into the city. In Rome the "Leonardo Express" will take you from the airport of Fiumicino to the rail station, Stazione Termini. From there you can take a taxi to your final destination. Airports are filled with signs that will lead you to the shuttle's station. Tickets can be bought on the premises. The Volainubus Airport Shuttle connects Vespucci Airport to downtown Florence. Tickets are purchased on board and cost 4 Euros. Galileo Galilei, Pisa's airport, has direct train services to Florence. The 80 km trip costs around 5 Euros.

The best way to get to and from Milan

Malpensa airport to the downtown area is by MalpensaExpress Train. The standard fare is 9 Euros. There is also a deluxe bus which leaves every 30 minutes to Milan railway station and downtown Milan. The fare for the bus is 5 Euros per person. Buses are available from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Several charter flights arrive in Bergamo instead of Milan. Buses leave regularly and will take you to Milan's Central Station.

Palermo International Airport is on the northern coast of the island of Sicily and is the main air hub for the island. There is one modern and well-equipped terminal that handles international and domestic traffic, and public transport to the city is provided by buses.

ROME

Fiumicino – Leonardo da Vinci or Ciampino;
www.adr.it

MILAN

Malpensa or Linate;
www.sea-aereoportimilano.it

BERGAMO

Milano Orio al Serio; www.sacbo.it

TURIN

Città di Torino; www.airport.turin.it
GENOA

Cristoforo Colombo – Sestri;
www.airport.genoa.it

BOLOGNA

Guglielmo Marconi;
www.bologna-airport.it

VENEZIA

Marco Polo; www.veniceairport.it

FLORENCE

Amerigo Vespucci; www.aereoport.firenze.it

PISA

Galileo Galilei; www.pisa-airport.it

NAPLES

Capodichino; www.gesac.it

PALERMO

Punta Raisi; www.gesap.it

Trains

Trenitalia is the name of the Italian State Railroad which runs a nationwide network at reasonable prices calculated on the distance traveled.

There are several categories of trains; each category is differentiated by the level of comfort, the speed, the price, the accessory services offered and the number of stops.

The Eurostar is the top category of trains. They are the most costly and the most comfortable. They only stop at the major cities. For instance, between Milan and Naples, Eurostar trains only stop in Bologna, Florence, and Rome. Eurostar trains only travel by day and require a reservation, so the tickets are better bought in advance. Reservation is free and issued with the ticket.

Intercity and IntercityPlus trains are quite comfortable and fast, traveling between all major and important Italian towns and cities. Intercity trains stop more often than Eurostar trains, but they still do not stop in small villages and towns. Bar service is available. Intercity Notte trains travel by night.

Eurocity and Eurocity Notte trains, similar to Intercity trains, travel on international routes.

Espresso trains are the cheapest trains traveling long distances. They have both national and international service and usually stop only in the main cities and towns.

Interregionale, Regionale and Diretto are trains that travel medium distances, from cities to small towns.

Discounts are available for students, disabled,

and seniors. Special fares are often applied on national holidays (last summer, for example, traveling on Ferragosto cost only 1 Euro no matter what destination).

Trenitalia offers all non-residents a new rail pass, the Trenitalia Pass, which replaces the old Flexicard. Available in both first and second class, this pass allows three to 10, consecutive or not, days of unlimited travel within a two month period. It can be used on any train in Italy, with the exception of the Eurostar Italia, where a small supplement is due. This pass also offers discounts at certain hotels and other special offers. It is avail-



able in three versions; Basic, for adults traveling in first and second class;

for those under 26 there is a Trenitalia Youth Pass; and a Trenitalia Pass Saver for small groups of two to five people. Passes can be bought at travel agencies and at the rails stations.

Taxis

Government-regulated taxis are either white or yellow. Avoid taxis that are not metered and have no official signs. They are private cars that will charge you an expensive fee. Unlike in the States, taxis cannot be hailed on the street, but can be found at specific taxi stands on the street, or they can be called by phone. All charges are listed on a price chart displayed inside the cab. Extra charges are in effect at night, for luggage service, and phone booking. A 10% tip is expected but not mandatory.

Buses

PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE:					
Days	Basic		Youth	Saver	
	1 class	2 class	2 class	1 class	2 class
3	140	112	94	119	95
4	158	126	106	134	107
5	176	140	118	149	119
6	194	154	130	164	131
7	212	168	142	179	143
8	230	182	154	194	155
9	248	196	166	209	167
10	266	210	178	224	179

TIP: All train tickets must be validated before boarding the train at those yellow boxes at the entrance of the tracks. If they are not, the tickets are invalid and you will be charged a fee. Smoking onboard is not permitted. www.trenitalia.com

Local buses are a great way to get around the city. All Italian cities have a well organized bus and tram system that will take you to most destinations. Prices differ according to the city you are in. Tickets can be purchased at newsstands, tobacco shops and subway stations. All tickets must be time stamped using the machines on board the buses.

Subway

In Italy, just a few cities offer subway service. Rome and Milan were the first two, followed through the years by Naples, Genoa and Catania. On February 4, 2006, subway service was inaugurated in Turin.

Milan offers three subway lines, M1 (red), M2 (green), M3 (yellow), and three more lines are in the works. All three lines take you to the city's landmarks and to different towns on the outskirts. The M1 is the line that will take you to Milan's

spectacular center where you can see the Duomo and the surrounding shopping area, Corso Vittorio Emanuele. A booklet of 20 tickets costs 20 Euros. Upon validation, tickets are valid for 75 minutes. www.atm-mi.it

Rome has two subway lines, A (orange) and B (blue). The former cuts through the city on the north-west and south-east sides, while the latter on the north-east and south sides. The A is the line that offers stops at more famous locations such as Piazza di Spagna, Fontana di Trevi, San Pietro and Musei Vaticani. The BTI ticket is offered to visitors, and it is valid for three days after having been validated. It can be used on buses, subway and local trains. It costs 11 Euros. www.atac.roma.it

Naples has five lines, all under renovation. The Linea 1 has been renamed Metrò dell'Arte as a permanent display of modern art has been installed at every stop. This line constitutes the central ring of the Neapolitan subway system. Single tickets cost 1 Euro and are valid for 90 minutes. All tickets are valid for buses, funiculars, metro and local railways in Naples and adjacent municipalities (Uniconapoli). Naples also has a suburban train line, the Ferrovia Circumvesuviana, that will get you to Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Sorrento.

Road

The *Autostrada* (AA), the national highway, stretches along the entire peninsula. It has tolls which are applied according to distances and size of motor vehicle. Some stretches are toll-free such as the Salerno-Reggio Calabria and the Palermo-Catania. Payments can be made by credit card if you are short on cash. At the toll station, get into



the Via Card lane. Road signs are international and easy to read for all. On major highways, gas stations are open 24 hours.

Autogrills are rest stops along the highway. The smaller ones are cafés while the bigger ones are also restaurants that offer delicious snacks and even meals.

The larger Autogrills have stores where you will be able to buy all kinds of specialty foods (cheeses, meats, snack foods) and beverages (wine, beer and liquor). They also have travel supplies from drug store items to electronics.

Italian law requires that all passengers wear a seat belt, and to respect the speed limit which is 30 mph in urban areas, 55 mph on country roads and 80 mph on highways. Tickets for speeding are high. For vehicle breakdown, dial 116, and the nearest Automobile Club of Italy (ACI) will send assistance. www.autostrade.it www.aci.it

If you don't like paying the tolls on the autostrada, you can usually find a road labeled "ss" on your map, paralleling the autostrada. Those are "strade statali" or state roads. The speed limit is 90-110 km when it's clear for a stretch, and 30-50 near towns. They are twistier and usually far more scenic. The autostrada signs have a green background, while the state roads use the color blue.

Rental Cars

When choosing to rent a car, go with the best car rental companies in Italy.

There are many agencies: AutoEurope, Hertz, Avis, Europcar, to name a few.

In making your car rental arrangements, consider and compare the following important pricing points:

- The lowest, all inclusive car rental rates with no hidden charges, just pay for gas
- Includes all the insurance, including the deductible
- Over 400 pick up and drop off points in Italy

- Reliability, late model fleet (rental cars change every six months)
- 24 hour road side assistance
- No drop off charges
- All taxes (Airport and IVA) included
- Toll-free telephone number in Italy
- An International Driver's license is required for driving in Italy, and it's advisable to get insurance.

When you pick up your car, be sure to find out from the rental company which type of gas it takes. Sometimes the larger rental cars are diesel. Diesel gasoline is less expensive, so that makes a larger car more affordable to drive.

Parking 101

The more tourist-oriented towns and cities have large parking lots (a pagamento) with parking rates just outside the historic centers. Street parking is organized and designated with signs and by the color of the lines for the parking spots. The color of the lines on the parking space indicates the type of parking; white is for free parking, blue is for paid parking. There will be a payment machine or a place to buy tickets close by. You get a receipt telling you how long you can stay (the time your parking expires is usually printed on the receipt). Put this receipt in the car window.

If parking is free but time limited, you must use a disco orario (a parking disk) to indicate the time you parked. When you rent a car in Italy, they may already have a parking disc. If they do not, you can purchase one at a tobacco store or gas station. They are not expensive. To use the parking disc, set it to indicate the time you parked and place it inside your car in the windshield so it can be seen by the parking police.

Some cities offer special Parking Cards, such as Milan. Prices range from 12 to 50 Euros.

Ferries

Regular boats and hydrofoil services run to most

of the islands, local and international. Service is available to Capri, Ischia, Elba, Sardinia, Sicily, the Aeolian Islands, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Malta, and Corsica. www.ferriesonline.com

