

USEFUL TRAVEL TIPS

Tickets, passports, visas and health requirements

You must have your airline ticket and a valid passport in order to travel. Passports expiring within 3 months of the travel period must be renewed. Visas are not required by U.S. citizens unless they expect to stay in Italy over 90 days and/or to study or seek employment. Non-citizens of the U.S. should check their requirements with the Italian Consulate. Vaccinations are not required.

Insurance

Passengers are strongly advised to purchase insurance to cover trip cancellation/interruption, baggage and accident coverage. It is advisable to leave your valuables at home.

Baggage

Checked baggage is limited to **one** bag per person. There can be no exceptions. Your one checked bag is limited to 50 pounds and 62 inches (length + width + height) or excess charges will be collected by the airline at the airport. You may also bring a *small* carry-on bag that will fit under an airline seat and on the small parcel racks of the motor coach, which average about 8 inches high by 18 inches deep. It is best if your carry-on bag is soft sided as the parcel racks on the motor coaches are small. Do *not* lock baggage you intend to check in at the airport. (Note to deviating passengers: Baggage regulations are different for local flights within Europe and there are expensive fees for excess baggage. It is very important to check directly with your carrier for specifics.)

Restrictions for Carry on Bags:

- Travelers are allowed to transport only small amounts of liquids, gels, lotions, aerosols or similar items on their person or in their carry-on luggage. This includes items such as hairspray, toothpaste and shampoo.
- Bottles are to be travel sizes of 3 ounces or less. These bottles must be carried in a one quart zip-lock bag.
- Beverages may be purchased once inside the secured area of the airport and carried on the aircraft.
- Prescription medicine with a name that matches the name on the passenger's ticket and essential non-prescription medicines, NOT TO EXCEED 4 ounces per container, are allowed. Additionally, liquids or gels (including juice) for diabetic passengers to address their medical condition, NOT TO EXCEED 5 ounces per container, will be allowed. These items must be presented for inspection at the security checkpoint.
- Essential non-prescription medicines allowed now include contact eye saline solutions and eye care products such as eye drops and contact lens solution.

Duty Free items may be transported in the cabin of the aircraft if they are delivered to the passenger immediately before boarding or onboard the aircraft.

Customs Regulations

Luggage is examined upon entering and leaving Italy. Free entry is allowed for personal effects such as clothing. Returning to the U.S., residents are granted a tax exemption on articles totalling \$400 in retail value provided they accompany you, are for your own use, and are declared. Customs regulations permit U.S. citizens to mail home one gift each day (excluding liquor, tobacco, and perfume) not exceeding \$50 in value. Keep receipts. There are not customs forms when entering Italy; there are customs forms when entering the U.S. and these forms are for everyone, including U.S. citizens.

Currency

Italy has no restrictions on the amount of foreign currency imported. However, everyone entering Italy with more than \$2,500 or the same amount in Euro currency should declare the amount being carried. It is advisable to change \$100 into Euro prior to leaving the U.S. This enables you to have cash on hand upon arrival in Italy. Tourists reaching Italy without Italian currency (Euro) can obtain Euro through any bank or exchange office (*Ufficio Cambi*) at airports. The balance of monies should be carried in Travellers Checks for your protection, and may be exchanged for Euro in banks as well as hotels. Most major credit cards are accepted, but not always. Visa and MasterCard are good almost everywhere.

Protect your money and valuables

It would be a good idea to use a money belt or something under your clothing. Although you are generally safe, pickpockets are around and they are faster than you can imagine. This is especially true when you are out on your own. Please be very careful.

Clothing

Casual, comfortable clothing is suggested. You may wish to bring something “dressy” for the Farewell Dinner. No shorts or mini skirts, and shoulders must be covered (men and women) when entering the basilicas. Be comfortable. Ladies do not need formal evening dresses and men do not need suits. Remember to bring comfortable walking shoes. High heels do not work well on cobblestone roads.

Electrical current

The rooms have hair dryers. If for some reason some may not, they will be available at the front desk of the hotel. All your U.S. appliances will need an adapter. The electrical current in Italy is AC and the cycle is 50. The voltage is 220.

Alarm clocks

You need not bring a travel alarm since you can ask the hotel for a “wake up call.”

Stay together

This is VERY important. Please remain with the group when you travel together and do not wander off on your own.

Religious goods

You will have time to purchase religious items during the trip. We will be able to recommend reputable dealers to you. There are many different stores and variety is great. You may also have things shipped back to the U.S.

Restrooms

Your hotel rooms have private bathroom facilities in each room. While you are travelling by motorcoach, the driver will stop periodically at an “*Autogrill*” so that you can use the restroom if necessary.

Refrigerator

If your hotel room has a refrigerator, please know that you will be charged if you take anything from it. It is not free. Feel free to take what you want, but please check the prices first and be aware of how much you are spending. It can be costly.

Water

The Roman water is of excellent quality and has been coming over the aqueducts built by the Romans for centuries. Some may taste a little different as is true even when going from one area of the U.S. to another. Mineral water is available in stores, restaurants, and bars at reasonable prices. There are two types of mineral water: without gas (*senza gas*) and with gas (*con gas*).

Food

Different restaurants serve different foods and at very different costs. All the dinners are included in the tour package, but if you want to stop at a restaurant for lunch, most menus are available before you enter, so check the prices first. Mineral water and wine are included in all the dinners.

Hours

Many shops open at about 9:00 am and some close between 1:00 – 4:00 pm. They stay open till 7:30 pm. They are open Monday – Saturday.

Money

Banks are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and from 2:45 pm to 4:15 pm. They are closed all day Saturday and Sunday. You will need your passport to change money. Money can be changed at the bank for a small fee and at the *Ufficio Cambi* for a percentage fee (usually much more expensive). Whenever possible, it would be advisable to use a bank.

Weather

The weather in September is usually warm but not terribly hot. It would be advisable, nonetheless, to wear a hat and bring a bottle of water during the day while you are outdoors.

Telephone

Calling from Europe is expensive. You may wish to purchase a calling card for either 5 Euro or 10 Euro (depending on how much you think you'll be calling) at either a News-stand or at a *Tabacchi* (T) store. To call the U.S., dial 001 followed by the area code and number.