

We know that far-off look.

Your mind sees a villa, an al fresco dinner under fairy lights as dusk falls, wine, pasta, smiles, laughter... Yes, it is real: so let's get you right to Italy, with the help of this **Inside Scoop.**

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Tips: Pronounce the "I" in Italian as the "I" in "It," never "Eye"talian. Take a card from your hotel for everyone in your group in case you get separated. "All roads lead to Rome" isn't just a line about ways to reach your goals, it also means if you go, take LeGrow's Travel Inside Scoop: Rome. Take LeGrow's Travel's Inside Scoop: Popular Phrases. People usually help if you try to speak a bit of this beautiful language.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- airport information transfers
- hiring local travel services
- maps, car rental, train tickets.

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A Maritime Travel Company

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Inside Scoop: ITALY

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

Your capacity for seeing beauty fills up very very fast in Italy. Everywhere you turn you're struck by a vista over a hill, an array of cheese in a store window or a sculpture in a town square. Since there's so much to see, plan ahead for the best use of time and your priorities.

- Be realistic: we know you want value in balancing choices and amenities with your budget. No matter what, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are requests only for such upgrades as room with a canal view.
- You must have a valid passport, www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp.
- Be aware of costly cell phone roaming charges. Wi-fi/internet is widely available. To call home, consider a service such as Skype.
- Banks charge fees to change funds and for ATM withdrawals. Canadian debit cards are accepted; log the dates you'll be away with your bank and credit card company.
- Take sun protection (sunscreen, sunglasses, hat and keep a water bottle filled). In summer it can get extremely hot, water can be costly and there's often little shade.
- In your carry-on, pack travel documents, passports, tickets, insurance, money and valuables, jewellery, drugs in original containers.
- Liquids, gels and creams in your hand luggage must be under 100ml(3.4oz) per item and be placed in a resealable plastic bag.
- You'll need adapter plugs (voltage converter) for Italy's 220 volt outlets.
- Italy is a walker's heaven but streets can be rocky (weary comfy shoes). To cover unanticipated issues (broken ankle?), we suggest Maritime Travel cancellation/interruption and medical insurance.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

A Walker's Paradise

Be prepared to enjoy getting lost (not that you will, but getting lost in an Italian town is one of life's pleasures, in fact, it's the entire point of a stroll in Venice). Become friends with your maps and plan out a few routes, memorize the names of a few main streets and certain landmarks.

Although small in size (almost exactly that of mainland Labrador), the country is packed with so many unique towns and gorgeous areas that you can spend months and not see most of it. Italy has 20 regions, from the well-known Tuscany, Umbria and Sicily to the should-be-known. Lesser known regions are worth visiting, especially in certain seasons when others are busier. While spending time in main cities is definitely suggested, areas outside cities are glorious, many easily reached by train and great for day visits. Before you go, check your library and our destination reports for information.

Tips: Some sites offer special tours—book well in advance (ask your counsellor) as spots are often limited. Religious sites often require arms be covered: take a sweater/scarf.

You Will Never Ever Starve

Pizza seems to have started in Gaeta in at least AD997, the Margherita version with tomatoes, basil and mozzarella the colours of Italy's flag. A restaurant's house wine tends to be good and good value (a Margarita cocktail not so much).

- Gelato is Italian ice cream/sorbet from a gelateria, in a cone or dish often with a biscuit popped in. Dense with intense flavours, try *limone* (lemon) and *cioccolata* (chocolate). With a low butterfat, have two. Ok three.
- Italy is the place to try foods you've not tried: don't stick to the same pasta. Each region offers unique foods and culinary specialties. While kids are very easy to feed being pasta and pizza heaven, have them try new things.
- Tips are optional, some restaurants add a fee if you sit at a table. There's usually a charge for bread; if you don't want it decline it when it's brought. Plain water costs as does carbonated "*acqua frizzante*" or "*acqua liscia*" (no carbonation). This old world wine country has unique offerings, an Amarone from Veneto is a treat. For low alcohol, try Prosecco.
- Eataly fans won't be disappointed; besides the 5 US stores (and elsewhere) showcasing high-quality Italian food and drink, Italy's 13 mega-stores include the world's biggest food park at Eataly World in Bologna. There's even a shuttle bus from the central station.

Your airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” www.catsa.gc.ca/home Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. **Check-in and carry-on baggage allowances**, see your airline’s website as size and weight restrictions vary by airline. Keep a separate photocopy or a photo on your cell of your passport’s ID page.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips at www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops

- Your sense of adventure & humour!

Your Exemptions

Italy is a shopper’s dream so see Canada Border Services Agency exemption limits for goods brought home www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html. For visits of 2 to 7 days the total allowed is \$800 and goods must be with you (including alcohol and tobacco). For 7+ days, the total is still \$800 but goods may be with you and/or follow via mail, etc. (fancy a Murano chandelier?). Goods must be calculated in Canadian funds at the current exchange rate so a €300 purse is a huge exemption chunk—but don’t buy a counterfeit purse as it can be seized at customs. **Tips:** Those hotel envelopes for writing letters from abroad? Take 2: in one tuck receipts for costs, the other receipts for items coming home. List rounded-up amounts on the outside in CAD (handy if a border agent asks). Take Maritime Travel’s Inside Scoop: Returning to Canada.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? Canada’s Embassy in Rome: Via Zara 30, 00198, tel: +39 06-85444-2911. There is a consulate in Milan, <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/italy>. Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca.

More UNESCO World Heritage Sites Than Any Other Country

This *belpaese* (beautiful country) is one of the most beautiful in the world. Art, food, a beautiful countryside, plus great shopping—Italy has it all! Its great città d’arte (cities of art) have drawn tourists for centuries. Enjoy the views from a street café and linger over lunch and an espresso. **Venezia (Venice)** is a museum of a city, perfect to wander with great finds around each corner. Must sees are the **Doge’s Palace** and **St. Mark’s Square**. If you arrive (or leave) at Marco Polo Airport, book a shared water taxi (Alilaguna) to a stop near your hotel;. If you arrive by train, public transit boats (vaporetti) are easy to navigate, cheap and fun! It might seem touristy but take a memorable gondola ride through the canals. August is a difficult month; there are many tourists and many locals literally head for the hills, some restaurants close. But there are tricks: eat at off hours, book accommodation well in advance and go to sites early. **Tips:** go for a walk really early one morning—it’s fascinating to see how the city works with supplies coming in by boats, how goods move around and how garbage is taken away. Like a huge theme park, much of the city’s daily life seems hidden. Ride a vaporetti to the island of **Murano**, home of hand blown glass. Near Venice, **Verona** is well worth a day trip; it’s reputed to have been the home of Romeo & Juliet.

Milano (Milan) is the fashion and design capital and second largest city. Its location makes it a natural transfer point if you arrive by train. It’s highly cosmopolitan with a population size approximately that of the Greater Toronto area. South of Milan on the coast, **Portofino** is a picturesque fishing town around a harbour with numerous nearby beaches. **Deruta**, south of **Perugia**, in the centre of Italy, is a “must visit” for ceramics and pottery. You can order custom colours and everything can be sent home.

The five villages of **Cinque Terre** are connected by trains and buses along the rugged north western coast on the **Italian Riviera**. With protected park status, it’s magnificent. Walking is popular *and* necessary (don’t think about a car with the many restrictions).

Art lovers head to **Firenze (Florence)**, the capital of Tuscany where the ratio of art per square foot must be 1:1. It’s safe to say if you love any kind of art, this is your country. Firenze always seems to be hosting an art festival (ask your counsellor about the Firenze Card). The **Accademia Gallery** and **Uffizi Gallery** are musts. Consider visiting the **Chianti** region (yes that wine) **Pisa** (yes that tower) and **Siena (Sienna)**, a small town with stunning architecture. With its **Palazzo Pubblico** (town hall), gardens, renown jazz school, festivals and year-round jazz concerts, it’s a culture-lover’s dream.

Napoli (Naples) is the city known the world over as pizza central, but its 448 historical churches make it one of the largest Catholic cities in the world, with a 2,800-year history. The **Amalfi Coast** contains 14 municipalities including the towns of **Amalfi** and **Positano** and finds such as **Sorrento**. The area features mild winters, with lemons grown along the entire coast February to October (if you love lemons, go to September’s annual lemon festival!). **Tip:** if a site is essential to you, first check your dates. On national holidays, sites and tourist offices might be closed, museums open for shorter hours and public transport is on limited service.

Cut Shopping Costs

Worth noting: leather goods, handcrafted jewellery, shoes and ceramics. We always recommend department stores, antique markets, secondhand stores, supermarkets (for pasta shapes) and local markets. Prices (also food for picnics) are usually lower and items seem less touristy (and there’s really cool stuff that makes for great gifts). At markets, avoid tempting a pickpocket by keeping money and valuables out of sight, use a front crossbody bag. Merchants don’t always provide bags, so bring a tote. You can find deals: kids t-shirts (not meant to last for years) often 3 for €10.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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