

The Survival Guide

The whole group of Rome wishes you a very very warm...

WELCOME TO ROMA!

This small guide wants to be a little more complete than the usual “pre material” sent by mail; we just tried to think about the common questions, that a newcomer like you, would have about Rome and Italy in general. Some paragraphs will not be essential, but some others may contain essential information that will, in our hope, give you a useful overview of this new environment in which you will spend at least 2 weeks.

Some paragraphs are very important, other paragraphs will tell you about the habits of our country. By living with us you will understand the differences that exist between the various European cultures and sometimes, maybe, you'll be surprised how Italians think or act differently than other populations, while some other times you'll discover how close we are; in all those case, just open your mind.

We have to become a single country, but this doesn't mean that we have to ignore our individuality, instead we have to know each other as much as possible, and this will make easy to co-operate and work together.

After an hard selection, you finally are expected in Rome. The whole group here, longly prepared this course and we'll do our best to make it working in the better way; on the other hand your co-operation will be essential, attending a BEST event means giving capital importance both to the didactic and the social part. This means that your good mood and your enthusiasm will be the capital component to fulfil one of the main objectives of the course:

TO HAVE FUN!

1. Something about our country and our city

Italy, placed right in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, is a 56 million people country formed by a main continental peninsula, almost completely surrounded by the sea, plus two large islands (Sicilia and Sardegna) and a great number of smaller islands, one of which (Lampedusa) is placed almost in front of Libya and far beyond the island of Malta.

The main land is approximately more than 1000 kilometres long and, I think, that his "boot" shape is definitely well know by everyone. Also Italians use sometimes to nick-name their country as "Lo stivale" (The boot, in Italian).

As every other Italian, we are of course proud of our messy, but still beautiful town. Rome is since 1870 the capital of Italy, but Historically it was always considered the most important city of our country.

2. A little bit of History

Rome is a very ancient city, so it's difficult to say when it was 'founded' if ever it was. The legends says Rome was planned by the Gods themselves. After the fall of Troy, it was the Gods who led a band of Trojans to a promised land in the west. There Romolo and Remo were born to a Vestal Virgin and nursed by a friendly She-wolf.

Upon reaching manhood, the twins founded Rome on the banks of the river Tevere; this happened on April the 21 of 753 BC, more than 2500 years ago. Soon, after digging the borders of the new city, Romolo claimed and promised on his own life «*anybody who dares to pass this borders without permission, will find here sure death!*». His brother Remo then, wanted to challenge Romolo and crossed the borders. Without esitation Romolo killed Remo and became the first king of Rome.

Don't be surprised of how many legends are involved in the story of Rome, since it's very difficult, also for the researchers, to make distinction between what is true or not; ancient romans were used to write history books changing a lot of things, just because they wanted to hide that the "Caput Mundi" was originally just a small group of people living on a hill, caring about some sheep and controlling the commercial traffic which had to cross the river Tevere.

But in a case or in the other, this small group of people held a very important position and all the surrounding populations began to attack them. After defeating the invading armies, this first little fierce group of primitive Romans took revenge conquering the surrounding kingdoms, turning them into Roman provinces. This is the beginning of the huge spreading of the Roman Kingdom first, then Roman Republic and finally Roman Empire, who took over all the populations of the Italian peninsula and began to spread beyond, in central Europe and in the northern part of Africa.

After the transition from Republic, the Roman Empire reached its biggest extension under the Emperor Traiano, soon after he conquered the Dacia (Old Romania). It appeared evident that the Empire was too big and so it was divided in two smaller empires, the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire. The Eastern empire could survive quite well till the arrival of the Muslims, but the Western one had a quite short life due to several invasions by barbaric populations, mainly coming from Asia, and in Italy began the long middle-age in which only the Church was able to keep culture and knowledge surviving.

During this period also the dimension of Rome decreased and for centuries a lot of foreign kings (mainly from France and Germany) tried to restore the Roman Empire. From then to one century ago, Italy was rarely a whole country, but more often it was formed by a lot of smaller states, often fighting each other.

The definitive reunification of Italy was operated around 1870, after a lot of attempts against the occupants (mostly Austrian in the North and Spanish in the South) with the co-ordination of the Kingdom of Piemonte (a northern Italian region), whose king became the king of Italy. At this point all Italy was reunited again with the only exception of Rome, which was the capital of the Vatican State, ruled by the pope. After a formal invasion, Rome was took by the Italian army on the 20th of September 1870 and became the capital of Italy one year later, on June 1871.

3. Geography and Structure of Rome

Looking a very large-scale map, you'll realize that Rome has a quite regular circular shape, bounded by a huge highway called "*Grande Raccordo Anulare*" or shortly GRA. The main roads of the city follow the tracks of the ancient roman streets and lead always radially from the center to the GRA and beyond. The city was once completely closed by this ring, but now as the population is increasing beyond 4 millions of people, a lot of buildings are being built around it.

The geometrical center of Rome is the Colosseo, just 100 meters from our university. However the "living center" of the town is mainly a little bit to the north, with all the famous streets like Via dei Condotti and Via del Corso with the finest fashion and jewellery shops. Last but not least, the political center of Rome is the Hill called Campidoglio, located above Piazza Venezia and which is worth a visit just to see the square in front of the City Hall, designed by Michelangelo.

About hills, maybe you know that Rome was called the *City of the 7 Hills*, but it will be hard for you to see them since now they're confused between the buildings. One of them quite visible is the Campidoglio; about the others, you will see some of them and just trust that there are also the other ones!

4. Monuments and Historical sites

When going around, sightseeing the streets of Rome, keep in mind that Rome's millenary and confused history is well represented by it's buildings and it's monuments. In the center of the town, most of the buildings are not less that 200 years old and if you look at their walls you can also find pieces of marble included in the walls, stolen from some ancient temple and used as construction material. It is possible to see some buildings with an ancient-roman basement, a middle-age first floor and a more recent roof and, if you enter some smaller churches, you will realize that all the columns are different one from the other, only because they were built within using the columns of several different temples.

The Ancient Rome had hundreds of buildings with magnificent marble columns; if you wonder where the hell they have gone, the answer is inside the hundreds of churches that you can see. After the Roman Empire, many churches were built with columns taken from Ancient and broken temples. The Colosseo itself is partially missing due to the fact that it was allowed to use its stones as construction material.

Our university itself is an ancient building derived from a monastery and in the same building there is also a very ancient and important church called San Pietro in Vincoli (the same

name of the university) and which contains one of the most important sculptures of Michelangelo Buonarroti: Il Mosè.

It would not be useful to list here the most important monuments of Rome, since it would be always incomplete, but almost immediately too long. But surely if you come to Rome, you can't miss some masterpieces as the Colosseo, the Vatican City, Piazza di Spagna, the Foro Romano, and some other tens of things which are usually concentrated in the inner part of the city.

5. Transportation

Of course the best way to move through a city like Rome is to use the underground, but unfortunately Rome has only two lines, so you can't avoid buses; the tickets for buses and underground cost *0,77 Euro*. Subway in Italy is called METRO. There are three lines, one of which is currently under construction:

- *line A (red): from **Anagnina** to **Battistini** Station;*
- *line B (blu): from **Rebibbia** to **Laurentina** Station;*
- *line C : under construction;*

Line A and line B intersect each other at **Termini** Railway Station, so you have to pass through Termini when you need to switch line.

Tiburtina Railway station is the second in order of size and traffic and is located along the B line. **Cavour** station (B line) is the most useful for you: the University and the youth hostel are both very close to it. We have to warn you: DON'T TAKE TAXIS, they are terribly expensive, meaning that a short trip may cost you not less than 10,33 Euro; going from the center of Rome to the Airport will cost you not less than 36 Euro. Bus lines cover all the most important destinations. You will find at least 2 different companies that provides public transport by bus: *Cotral*, the same that rules underground services (75 min. ticket costs 0.77 Euro) and *J lines*, introduced for the Jubilee, for which you need a different ticket that can be bought on board (75 min. ticket costs 0,98 Euro).

Remember that a *bus/metro ticket costs 0,77 Euro and you have to buy one before getting on*. The driver doesn't sell tickets. You can find bus/metro tickets at *tobacconist, newsstands, bars and machines in stations*. *Daily (3,10 Euro) and weekly bus/metro passes (12,40 Euro) are valid everywhere in the city, including Ostia but not Fiumicino Airport*.

Beside public transportation, we suggest you, especially in the evening, to move around the center simply walking as it can be an enjoyable and relaxing experience, providing to avoid all the big roads and walking only through the narrow and ancient streets of downtown.

6. Telephones

Public phones are available almost at every street corner. Some accept coins, others (most) accept telephone cards and some newer credit cards too. There are at least 3 different public phone providers: *Telecom* (orange color), *Infostrada* (green color) and *Albacom* (silver color). We suggest you to buy a phone card for Telecom phones (the most diffused in the city) even if you are going to make only urban calls. Their cost ranges between 2,58 Euro, 5,16 Euro (most popular) and (although difficult to find) 7,75 Euro. Call charges depend on the time of day and provider; usually, peak time is from 8am till 6pm.

The prefix for Roma is **06**. The international code for Italy is **39**. To make an **international call** from Italy start with 00 and add the complete international phone number, i.e. country code, city code without 0, recipient local number (*example: 00-33-(0)1-234567*). (Did someone not know this ;-) ?)

Emergency Local numbers	
112	public emergency service
113	Police
06 67 691	Municipal Police
06 58 20 10 30	Emergency Doctor
118	Ambulance emergency
06 49 06 63	Poisons emergency

TAXI: some taxi companies phone numbers... in case you get terribly lost in the middle of the night...

Taxi companies phone numbers	
06 49 94	La Capitale
06 66 45	Pronto Taxi
06 88 177	Cosmo Taxi
06 41 57	Radio Taxi Tevere

If you bring your mobile, there should be no problem to find a network to roam. There are 3 operators. *Tim, Omnitel* and *Wind*. If you consider buying a prepaid card in Italy, you have again 3 choices. Unless there are special offers, your first prepaid-SIM card will cost 30 Euro or 60 Euro, depending on the operator (this also totals the amount of calling value you start with). Reloading can be done for as little as 30 Euro.

7. Money & Banks

The local currency is called Euro; there are coins: 1 Euro-Cent, 2 Euro-Cent, 5 Euro-Cent, 10 Euro-Cent, 20 Euro-Cent, 50 Euro-Cent, 1 Euro, 2 Euro. There are notes, also: 5 Euro, 10 Euro, 20 Euro, 50 Euro, 100 Euro, 200 Euro, 500 Euro.

It is difficult to suggest a sharp amount of money, consider that you'll have to pay for

Some Example Prices (EURO)	
<i>1 beer</i>	4,13
<i>1 pizza + 1 beer</i>	6,2 - 10,33
<i>1 packet of cigarettes</i>	2,84
<i>1 can of Coke</i>	0,77 - 1,03
<i>An ice cream</i>	0,77 - 1,54
<i>1 sandwich</i>	0,77 - 1,54
<i>1 McDonalds Maxi Menu</i>	5,16
<i>A bottle of wine (supermarket - restaurant)</i>	3,1 - 7,75
<i>A postcard + stamp for EU</i>	0,77
<i>1 Bus/Tram/Metro ticket</i>	0,77
<i>Train from Fiumicino Airport to Roma Termini Station</i>	8,26

personal extras, which strongly depend on personal habits.

Banks: you can change money in banks and in exchange offices. Both are open on weekdays from 9 to 17.00, with a 1h30 lunch break around noon or so.

Tip: don't change too much money at the airport or railway station. When you arrive in Rome, you can change in the banks at a much better rate!

Payment Methods: electronic banking is widely available. You can often find a cash dispenser nearby that will accept EuroCheque-type cards. VISA and other credit cards are also widely in use.

8. Criminality

Our city is not particularly dangerous, but it's still a BIG city; so some attention should be paid and some universal rules should be followed. Especially in the area around our university, be careful about some small children, badly dressed who may go after you as soon as they realise that you are a tourist. Don't panic, they're not dangerous, instead they may try to steal your wallet, so keep a hand on it and just keep going straight. Of course, like any other big city you should avoid certain zones like the main railway station during the night unless you are not alone; keep in mind that you can rely on our experience, so feel free to ask us about some doubts concerning places to be avoided. However I don't want to scare you, Rome has a very low rate of criminality compared with the other big European capitals.

If seeking for Police, keep in mind that Military Police, called **CARABINIERI**, has all the functions of the normal police and is only differently dressed, almost all black. Other kinds of police you can look for is the State Police, **POLIZIA** and the Urban Police, **VIGILI URBANI**; unfortunately they rarely speak English fluently.

9. Alcohol & Drugs

Even if American tourists coming here are always surprised about this, maybe you already know that in Italy you can buy alcohol in any quantity, anywhere, at any age anytime and in almost all the public places selling drinks and food. Italian laws, which are surprisingly liberal in this occasion, don't restrict the alcoholic consumption unless you are going to drive (or piloting an aircraft of course). So the only way you can have trouble with police when drinking is becoming dangerous or aggressive towards other people. Also the maximum amount of alcohol that you can drink before driving is not really strict and you should not expect to run into troubles with police if you drank a couple of glasses of wine, and anyway you are not supposed to drive during our event unless you will come with your personal car, meaning that you can drink as much as you wish!

According to the latest referendum, in Italy is legal to take drugs, but it is illegal to distribute them; this means that if police is going to catch you with any kind of drugs (including Marijuana) you are going to be prosecuted only if the quantity that you are carrying exceed a minimal quantity that is allowed for personal use. This quantity is not set definitely but depends on the decision made by the court. In any case you are not allowed to cross the borders of Italy with any kind of drug.

10. Restaurants

Prices can differ a lot from a place to place; when computing prices, remember that in a restaurant you have to pay a fixed amount of money for each person (usually between 0,77 and 1,54 Euro) that is listed somewhere in the menu and in the bill, referred as "Pane e Coperto". This doesn't apply to restaurants like McDonald's in which there's no table dressing. A small tip is usually left of the table after paying and usually is between 5% and 10% but you don't have to leave it if you don't like the service.

11. Shops

In the period of the course shops will close most likely around 7.30 p.m., meaning that some of them will close at 7.00 or maybe at 8.00.

In the center of Rome you will mostly find small shops and little supermarkets; looking at the prices is a universal advice and remember that VAT (in Italian called IVA) is always included in the showed price. Especially if you are a girl you will want to wander around to see some clothes and shoes. There are some streets in the center of the town in which there is a high concentration of such kind of shops, some of them are Via del Corso, Via Nazionale and Via del Tritone. The area between these streets is also very interesting and is worth a walk.

There is no need of more information now since you will easily discover many nice shopping places during city rally and free time walks. For more specific information you can always ask to us when you are in Rome.

12. Pubs and discos

If you are going to seek a good Disco in Rome, you'll be surprised how expensive they are, compared with the other prices, and this is the reason why young Italians almost always go to Discos when outside Italy. You should expect to spend not less than 7,75 Euro, but sometimes entry price rises up to 21,00 Euro and over. Usually the ticket includes the first drink, while the next ones can be terribly expensive (5,16 ~ 10,33 Euro).

If you want to take a beer in a pub you can choose from a lot of places, and they are not too expensive (a beer may cost you about 2,10 - 4,13 Euro), but again always look for the prices first. Pubs are quite popular between Italian young people and everyone of us will be able to suggest you a good one.

13. Health

Insurance: you will not be ensured by us for your staying in Rome and we will not have any responsibility for everything (we hope nothing, of course!!!) could happen to you during the course. So you have to provide *by yourself* to stipulate an insurance covering at least medical care during your stay in Italy (you should bring with you at least **Form E-111** for EEC citizens).

If you are looking for a pharmacy (in Italian: FARMACIA), then you have to look for a green or red cross on the streets. There are many of them so it will be quite easy to find one. Every pharmacy is open during normal shopping hours, but there are some who are open also during the night and during holidays. Due to a recent law in Italy you should almost always have a medical receipt to buy even common medicines, but pharmacists will give them to you anyway as they consider this law useless. Anyway if you have some particular need or habit, don't forget to bring your personal medicine pack, since it will be probable that you will not find exactly the same here.

Should you need an ambulance, the 118 phone number is always the one to use; if possible ask to some Italian nearby to phone as the operator usually does some questions at the phone and he's not supposed to speak English.

14. Italian People

The Italian race is the result of a quite strong mix of many European and non European races, but still some characteristics are predominant, like the black hair and brown eyes and things like that. But remember that thinking that all Italian are like this is like thinking that all people from Sweden are blond with blue eyes or that all Martians are green.

Italian people are open and friendly and this may leave people from the northern countries a little bit concerned, as it is quite usual for people to talk each other on trains and buses even if they don't know each other. While on the streets of Rome, you can ask people to help you and they usually do their best, but not every Italian is able to speak English and young people are more likely to.

15. The Italian Language

The Italian language, straight derivation from the Latin language (which has always been important for Italian literature) is a quite difficult language, due to the incredible polymorphism of his words and sentences and the large number of exceptions in its rules. Of course this doesn't apply for those who come from Latin countries, such as Spain or Portugal since especially Spanish is very similar to Italian. The only easy thing about Italian is the pronunciation: with just 5 or 6 rules you should be able to read correctly almost all the Italian words without mistakes and of course without understanding almost anything of them.

If you already can understand some Italian probably you'll sometimes find it hard to understand us when speaking each other. Don't worry, you still can understand Italian, but many of us, during informal conversations, are tempted to use pronunciation and words from the roman dialect that compared to Italian is much more smooth, chewed and lazily spoken. Other Italians usually consider this dialect quite funny to be heard.

16. Your minimal dictionary

BASICS	
Italian	English
Ciao	Hello/Bye
Buon giorno	Good morning
Buona sera	Good evening
Buona notte	Good night
Arrivederci	Good bye
Come stai?	How are you?
Mi chiamo...	My name is...
Grazie	Thank you
Si/No/Forse	Yes/No/Perhaps
Dipende	It depends...

ON THE ROAD	
Italian	English
Che ora è?	What's the time?
Io non parlo italiano	I don't speak italian
Via/Piazza	Street/Square
Non capisco	I don't understand
Dove è...	Where is...
Dove è il bagno?	Where's the toilet?
Per favore	Please
Salute	Cheers
Uscita	Exit
Treno/Autobus/Taxi	Train/Bus/Taxi

IN THE SHOPS

Italian	English
Quanto costa?	How much is it?
Che cosa è questo?	What is this?
La mia taglia è...	My size is...
Voglio questo	I want this
Conto	Bill
Cambio/Denaro	Exchange Office/Money
Vino/Birra/Acqua	Wine/Beer/Water
Acqua minerale	Mineral water
Caffè/Latte/Tè	Coffee/Milk/Tea
Zucchero/Sale/Pepe	Sugar/Salt/Pepper

APPROACH TECHNIQUES

Italian	English
Mi piaci	I like you
Ti amo	I love you
Bacio	Kiss
Labbra	Lips
Hai degli occhi bellissimi	You have so beautiful eyes
Sei bello	You are handsome
Vuoi ballare con me?	Do you want to dance with me?
Posso accompagnarti a casa se vuoi	I can give you a lift home if you want
Amore	Love
Tesoro (literally Treasure)	Honey
Ti piaccio?	Do you like me?
Baciami	Kiss me
Non mi piaci	I don't like you
Sei bella	You are pretty
Te lo puoi scordare	Don't even think about it
Vuoi vedere la mia collezione di farfalle?	May I show you my butterfly collection?

ADVANCED APPROACH TECHNIQUES

Italian	English
Voglio fare l'amore con te!	I want to make love with you!
Ti è piaciuto?	Did you like it?
Facciamolo ancora	let's do it one more time
lo pratico sesso sicuro	I practice safe sex
Doveva essere solo un bacio	It was supposed to be only a kiss

FIVE PHRASES WE HOPE YOU'LL NEVER NEED

Italian	English
Siamo in Italia, vero?	We are in Italy, aren't we?
Dovevo andare al bagno ma non fa niente	I was needing a toilet, but it's too late
Non era un bagno?	Wasn't it a toilet?
Voglio l'ultima sigaretta	I want to smoke a last cigarette
Mi ammazzi con cortesia, la prego	Kill me gently please

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