Travel Information
Christmas Markets in the Italian Alps

Trento - Bolzano - Venice
10 Days / 9 Nights
11 Travelers
Date of Issue: October 21, 2026
December 5, 2026 - December 14, 2026



Click here to view your Digital Itinerary

Italy

Entry Requirements
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS — ITALY

U.S. citizens traveling to Italy for tourism do not need a visa for stays of up to **90 days within any 180-day period**.

Your passport must:

- Be valid for at least **three months beyond the date you plan to leave the Schengen Area**.
- Have been issued within the previous **10 years**.

Italy is part of the **Schengen Area**. The 90-day limit applies to time spent throughout the Schengen Area combined, not separately to each country. Travelers can normally move between Schengen countries without routine immigration checks, although temporary border controls may occasionally be introduced.

Entry/Exit System (EES)

The European Union's **Entry/Exit System (EES)** is now operational. It electronically records the arrival and departure of non-EU citizens making short visits and has replaced routine passport stamping.

Travelers will have their facial image and fingerprints recorded when crossing an external Schengen border. The initial registration process may require additional time at immigration.

ETIAS Travel Authorization

As of October 2026, the **European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)** is not yet operational, and applications are not being accepted.

Once implemented, U.S. citizens traveling visa-free will need to obtain an online ETIAS travel authorization before departure, subject to the applicable transitional arrangements.

Travelers should check the official European Union website for the confirmed implementation date and application requirements. **Do not apply through unofficial websites offering ETIAS authorizations before the system launches.**

Entry requirements and implementation dates can change. Before departure, consult the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the European Union's official **Travel to Europe** website for current information.

Official resources:

- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://<a href=">https://www.esteri.it/en/
- EU Entry/Exit System: http://<a href=">https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees
- EU ETIAS Information: http://<a href=">https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias

Banking and Currency
CURRENCY, BANKING AND TIPPING IN ITALY

Local Currency

Italy uses the **Euro (€)**, the common currency of many European countries.

- **Currency:** Euro
- **Symbol:** €
- **ISO Code:** EUR
- **Subunit:** Cent (100 cents = €1)
- **Banknotes:** €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200. The €500 note remains legal tender but is no longer issued and is rarely encountered.
- **Coins:** 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, €1, €2

Banking and Credit Cards

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted throughout Italy, including at hotels, restaurants, shops, and major attractions.

- **Visa and Mastercard:** Widely accepted
- **American Express:** Accepted at many hotels and larger establishments, but less consistently at smaller businesses
- **Discover and Diners Club:** Limited acceptance
- **Contactless payments:** Commonly available, including Apple Pay and Google Pay

Most credit card transactions use chip or contactless technology. Travelers should know their card's **four-digit PIN**, particularly for ATM withdrawals and automated payment machines.

We recommend carrying a modest amount of cash in euros for small purchases, local markets, cafés, and establishments that may not accept cards.

Banking Hours

Banks generally operate Monday through Friday, approximately **8:30 AM–1:30 PM**, with some branches reopening in the afternoon until around 4:00 PM.

Most banks are closed on weekends and public holidays. Hours vary by location and institution.

Foreign currency exchange services are available at banks, airports, and authorized exchange offices, although exchange rates and fees may vary considerably.

ATMs

ATMs are widely available in Italian cities and towns and are commonly called **Bancomat**.

We recommend using ATMs operated by established banks rather than independent currency exchange machines, which may charge higher fees.

When withdrawing cash:

- Use a debit card with a four-digit PIN.
- Look for an ATM displaying your card's banking network.
- Check with your bank regarding international withdrawal fees and daily limits.
- Decline any optional currency conversion offered by the ATM.
- Withdraw a reasonable amount at one time to minimize repeated transaction fees.

Important: When an ATM or credit card terminal offers to charge you in U.S. dollars or euros, always select **euros (EUR)** and decline the offered conversion. Your own card issuer will generally provide a more favorable exchange rate, subject to its fees.

Notify Your Bank Before Travel

Many financial institutions no longer require advance travel notifications, but we recommend checking your bank's current policy before departure.

Ensure your bank has your current contact information and that you can receive transaction alerts while abroad.

Keep a separate record of your card issuer's international customer service number, as U.S. toll-free numbers may not work from Italy.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping in Italy is appreciated but generally not obligatory. Unlike in the United States, restaurant staff receive regular wages and do not depend on tips to the same extent.

Restaurants and Cafés

- For casual meals and cafés, rounding up the bill or leaving a few euros for good service is appreciated.
- For a full-service restaurant, a gratuity of approximately 5–10% for particularly good service is generous but not required.
- Check your bill for a *servizio* (service charge). If service is included, no additional gratuity is necessary.
- Many restaurants charge a *coperto*, a small per-person cover charge for table settings and bread. This is not a gratuity.

Taxis

Tipping taxi drivers is not customary. Rounding up the fare or allowing the driver to keep a few euros in change is appreciated, particularly if they assist with luggage.

Hotel Staff

Small gratuities for porters or housekeeping are appreciated but discretionary.

Guides and Drivers

For organized tours, gratuities for guides and drivers are typically included in your program or addressed separately in your trip documentation. Please refer to your Conservancy Travel itinerary and inclusions for specific arrangements.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

AIR

Main airlines: ITA Airways, Ryanair, easyJet, and other European and international carriers

Major international airports: Rome Fiumicino (FCO), Milan Malpensa (MXP), Venice Marco Polo (VCE), Naples (NAP), Florence (FLR), Bologna (BLQ)

Other airports serving domestic and international flights: Milan Linate (LIN), Rome Ciampino (CIA), Pisa (PSA), Turin (TRN), Catania (CTA), Palermo (PMO)

ROAD

Driving on the: Right

Paved roads: Yes

Gravel roads: Yes, particularly in rural areas

International Driving Permit required: Yes, for U.S. license holders unless accompanied by an official Italian translation of their valid license

Car rental available: Yes

Taxis: Yes

Ride-hailing services: Yes, primarily in larger cities, with availability varying by location

Italy has an extensive highway network, including toll roads known as *autostrade*. Many historic city centers have restricted traffic zones (*Zona a Traffico Limitato* or ZTL), where unauthorized vehicles are subject to fines.

BUS

Intercity bus services: Yes

Local city bus networks: Yes

Public buses serve cities, towns, and rural communities throughout Italy. Regional and long-distance coaches connect destinations not easily reached by rail.

RAIL

National railway system: Yes

High-speed rail: Yes, connecting major cities including Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, Naples, and Bologna

Metro systems: Yes, including Rome, Milan, Naples, and Turin

Regional trains: Yes, providing extensive connections between smaller cities and towns

Italy has a well-developed railway network operated primarily by Trenitalia, with additional high-speed services provided by Italo.

WATER

Ferries: Yes

Water taxis: Yes, particularly in Venice and other coastal destinations

Leisure cruises: Yes

Water buses: Yes, including Venice's *vaporetti*

Ferries connect mainland Italy with Sicily, Sardinia, and numerous smaller islands. Seasonal passenger boats also operate along popular coastal destinations and on Italy's lakes.

Health and Medical Information

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN ITALY

Travel in **Italy** presents generally low health risks. Healthcare standards, sanitation, and food safety are excellent, particularly in major cities and established tourist destinations.

Vaccinations

No special vaccinations are generally required for travel to Italy. Travelers should ensure routine immunizations are current and consult their physician before departure if they have specific health concerns.

Food and Water

Food safety standards are high, and travelers can confidently enjoy Italy's renowned regional cuisine.

- **Tap water is safe to drink** in most parts of Italy.

- Public drinking fountains are common, particularly in Rome. Avoid fountains marked *acqua non potabile* (not drinking water).
- Bottled mineral water, both still (*naturale*) and sparkling (*frizzante*), is widely available.
- Travelers with food allergies should communicate their requirements clearly when dining.

Pharmacies and Medical Care

Italy has a well-established healthcare system, with modern hospitals and medical facilities throughout the country.

Pharmacies (*farmacie*) are widely available and identified by a distinctive illuminated green cross. Pharmacists can advise on minor illnesses and recommend appropriate nonprescription medications.

For medical emergencies, dial **112**, Italy's emergency assistance number.

Medications

Bring **an adequate supply of prescription medications** for the entire trip, with a small additional supply in case of unexpected delays.

- Carry medications in **hand luggage**.
- Keep medications in their **original labeled containers**.
- Bring a **copy of your prescriptions**, preferably showing the generic medication names.
- Do not assume that your usual medications or brands will be available in Italy.

Walking and Hydration

Exploring Italy's historic cities and villages often involves **extended walking on cobblestones, uneven pavement, steep streets, and stairs**. Historic sites may have limited accessibility, and comfortable, supportive walking shoes are essential.

Summer temperatures can be high, especially in southern Italy. Stay hydrated, use sun protection, and take advantage of shaded areas and rest breaks.

Jet Lag and Sleep Adjustment

Travelers arriving from North America may experience jet lag during the first few days.

To adjust more quickly:

- Spend time outdoors in natural daylight.
- Avoid long daytime naps.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Adjust to local meal and sleeping hours.

We recommend **arriving one or two nights before your program begins** to rest and adjust to the time change. Conservancy Travel offers **pre-trip hotel nights** in most destinations.

Personal Comfort Items

A small personal health kit can be helpful during travel. Suggested items include:

- Pain reliever (acetaminophen or ibuprofen)

- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Motion sickness medication if needed
- Bandages and blister protection
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen and insect repellent, particularly during warmer months

Travel Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended, including coverage for **medical expenses, trip interruption, and emergency medical evacuation**.

Travelers should confirm that their policy provides appropriate international medical coverage.

Personal Health Responsibility

Travelers are responsible for ensuring they are **fit for travel and able to participate comfortably in the activities described in their itinerary**.

If you have medical conditions or mobility limitations that could affect your participation, consult your physician before departure and advise Conservancy Travel of any assistance you may require.

Guests should travel with adequate medications and personal health supplies and take normal precautions to maintain their wellbeing.

Medical Advice Before Travel

If you have questions concerning your health or international travel, consult your physician or a **travel medicine specialist** several weeks before departure.

For general international travel health guidance, consult the **World Health Organization** or your healthcare provider.

Make the health guidance more concise

Safety Notices
SAFETY IN ITALY

Italy is generally a safe destination for travelers. As in any popular tourist destination, visitors should exercise common sense and remain aware of their surroundings, particularly in busy cities and crowded public areas.

The most common concerns for travelers are **pickpocketing, bag theft, and occasional tourist scams**, especially in Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, and Naples.

Personal Safety and Security

- Carry only the cash and credit cards you expect to need during the day. Keep additional funds and valuables secured.
- Use a crossbody bag, concealed travel pouch, or money belt for important items.
- Be particularly attentive in airports, train stations, on public transportation, and around major tourist attractions.
- Keep handbags and personal belongings close to you in restaurants, cafés, and public spaces.

- Be cautious of unexpected distractions, unsolicited assistance, or strangers approaching you with offers that involve money.
- When exploring unfamiliar areas after dark, remain on well-lit streets and consider going with a companion.

Pickpocketing and Tourist Scams

Pickpockets sometimes work in groups, using distractions to divert attention while an accomplice takes valuables.

Exercise particular caution on crowded trains, buses, and metro systems, including when boarding or disembarking. Never leave luggage unattended, and keep smaller bags containing valuables with you.

Be wary of unsolicited offers of assistance at ticket machines, requests for donations, or individuals offering gifts and then demanding payment.

Valuables

We recommend leaving unnecessary valuables and expensive jewelry at home.

Most hotels provide in-room safes for passports, additional cash, and other valuables. Secure these items whenever they are not needed.

Never leave handbags, cameras, or phones unattended on café tables, chairs, or in public areas.

Consider insurance for valuable camera equipment or other expensive personal belongings. **Neither Conservancy Travel nor our local operator in Italy is responsible for lost or stolen personal property**, including cash, jewelry, electronic devices, or luggage.

Emergency Assistance

Italy's national emergency number is **112**, which connects callers to police, ambulance, and fire services. Calls are free from mobile phones and landlines.

If you experience a theft or lose your passport, notify your tour leader or local representative promptly so they can assist you with the appropriate procedures.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service for U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad.

Enrollment allows travelers to receive important safety and security updates from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and helps consular officials contact travelers or their emergency contacts in the event of an emergency.

Participation is voluntary, but we recommend enrolling before departure.

Enroll online: http://<a href=">https://step.state.gov

Travelers may also wish to review current destination safety information before departure.

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice
FOOD AND WATER SAFETY

- **Tap water:** Safe to drink throughout Italy unless otherwise indicated.
- **Fresh fruit and vegetables:** Safe
- **Ice:** Safe
- **Meat and seafood:** Safe when properly prepared and handled
- **Street food:** Generally safe from reputable vendors

LOCAL CUISINE

Italian cuisine is renowned for its regional diversity, fresh seasonal ingredients, and deep-rooted culinary traditions. From handmade pasta and risotto to wood-fired pizza, regional cheeses, cured meats, and exceptional seafood, each region offers its own distinctive specialties. Olive oil, fine wines, and traditional desserts are integral to Italy's gastronomic heritage. Beyond its celebrated dishes, Italian food culture reflects a profound appreciation for local ingredients, time-honored recipes, and the pleasure of sharing a meal.

Climate and Weather

CLIMATE

Italy enjoys a predominantly Mediterranean climate, with regional variations influenced by geography, elevation, and proximity to the sea. Northern Italy experiences cooler winters and warm, sometimes humid summers, while central and southern regions generally enjoy milder winters and hotter, drier summers. The Alps and other mountainous areas have significantly cooler temperatures and snowfall in winter.

Winter (December–February) is typically mild in the south, with temperatures around 45–60°F, while northern cities experience colder conditions, occasionally approaching freezing.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

CLOTHING CHOICES FOR ITALY

Dress on our trips is **functional, comfortable, and casual**. No formal or dressy clothing is necessary.

- Choose comfortable clothing suitable for walking, sightseeing, and visiting historic sites.
- Pack versatile, **mix-and-match layers** that can be adjusted to changing temperatures.
- Neutral colors such as black, gray, navy, and beige are easy to coordinate and can be accented with colorful scarves or accessories.
- Italians generally favor smart-casual clothing for everyday wear, although athletic clothing is increasingly common. Comfortable, practical attire is entirely appropriate for sightseeing.
- **Comfortable, supportive walking shoes** are the most important item to bring. Italy's historic cities often have cobblestone streets, uneven pavement, and numerous stairs.
- When visiting churches and religious sites, modest clothing is expected. Some churches require shoulders and knees to be covered. A lightweight scarf or shawl can be useful.

Seasonal Considerations

Winter (December–February)

Weather: Mild in southern Italy but considerably colder in the north and mountainous regions. Northern cities may experience temperatures near freezing, while southern destinations generally range from 45–60°F.

- A warm coat appropriate to your destination
- Sweaters, long-sleeved shirts, and thermal layers
- Waterproof walking shoes or boots

- Gloves, a scarf, and a warm hat, particularly in northern Italy

Laundry

Most hotels offer laundry services, although these can be expensive. We recommend packing clothing that is easy to wash and quick to dry.

Lightweight undergarments and small clothing items can be handwashed as needed. Bringing a small quantity of travel laundry detergent can be helpful.

Packing Tip: Italy's climate varies considerably between regions and seasons. Consult the weather forecast for your specific itinerary shortly before departure, and pack layers rather than relying on a single type of clothing.

Internet Availability

INTERNET AND MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS IN ITALY

Free Wi-Fi is widely available throughout Italy, particularly in hotels, restaurants, cafés, and many public spaces. Connection quality may vary, especially in rural areas and historic buildings.

Mobile Phones

If you plan to use your smartphone while traveling, check with your mobile provider before departure regarding international coverage, roaming charges, and available travel plans.

An eSIM is often the most convenient and economical way to access mobile data while traveling internationally.

An eSIM (embedded SIM) is a digital alternative to a traditional physical SIM card. It allows you to connect to a local mobile network without replacing your existing SIM card.

Many providers offer international eSIM plans, including <Link url="http://<a href=">https://www.airalo.com" title="Airalo"/>. To use an eSIM, your phone must be **unlocked and eSIM-compatible**.

Before leaving home:

- Download your chosen eSIM provider's app.
- Select Italy or a regional European data plan.
- Purchase a plan suitable for your expected data usage.
- Follow the provider's instructions to install the eSIM while you have a reliable internet connection.

Upon arrival in Italy:

- Activate your eSIM according to the provider's instructions.
- Select the eSIM as your preferred line for mobile data.
- Turn on data roaming for the eSIM if required by the provider.
- Turn off data roaming on your regular home SIM to avoid unexpected charges.

Most travel eSIM plans provide **data only**, rather than traditional voice calls or SMS. You can still make calls and send messages using internet-based apps such as WhatsApp.

Please remember to **silence phone notifications, ringers, keyboard tones, and other electronic sounds** while traveling with your group, particularly during guided visits, lectures, and presentations.

Smartphone Apps and Staying in Touch

Internet-based apps such as **WhatsApp and FaceTime** make it easy to send messages, make voice calls, and video chat with family and friends while abroad. These services use Wi-Fi or mobile data rather than traditional international calling.

We recommend installing and familiarizing yourself with your preferred communication apps before departure.

Conservancy Travel recommends WhatsApp for communication with your Trip Leader and fellow travelers, both while in transit and during your program.

Should you need to contact Conservancy Travel while traveling to the start of your trip, or in the event of an emergency, **WhatsApp is one of the easiest ways to reach us**.

For reliable communication, we recommend arranging mobile data access rather than depending exclusively on hotel or public Wi-Fi.

Electricity and Plug Standards

Electrical Information for US Travelers

Italy uses European-standard electrical systems with Type C and Type E outlets, operating at 230V/50Hz

Most modern electronics (laptops, phone chargers, cameras) are dual-voltage and require only a plug adapter. However, single-voltage North American appliances like hair dryers or curling irons will need both an adapter and a voltage converter.

We recommend bringing a quality universal adapter and checking your device specifications before departure to ensure seamless connectivity throughout your journey.

General Guidance

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN ITALY

Travel in Italy often involves considerable walking and standing, particularly in historic city centers, medieval villages, churches, museums, archaeological sites, gardens, and neighborhoods where streets and buildings may be centuries old.

Many historic centers are pedestrianized or have restricted vehicle access. Motorcoaches may need to park outside central areas, requiring travelers to walk to hotels, restaurants, museums, churches, and other sites. In some locations, guests may need to walk with their hand luggage.

Italian towns and cities frequently feature **cobblestone streets, uneven pavement, stone stairways, narrow sidewalks, steep inclines, and irregular surfaces**. Hill towns can be particularly challenging, with steep streets and numerous steps. These conditions require extra care, especially in wet weather.

Travelers should be comfortable **walking two to four miles over the course of a day**, sometimes more on full sightseeing days, and standing for extended periods during guided visits.

Historic churches, palaces, archaeological sites, and museums may have stairs, uneven floors, narrow passageways, and limited handrails. Elevators are not always available, particularly in older buildings. Even when elevators exist, some areas may only be accessible by stairs.

Italy's trains, metro systems, and public transportation may involve stairs, platforms, escalators, and walking considerable distances through busy stations. Travelers may need to move efficiently while managing their hand luggage.

Comfortable walking shoes with excellent support and traction are essential. Shoes should be broken in before departure and suitable for cobblestones, stone steps, gravel paths, and uneven surfaces.

Individual Conservancy Travel programs vary in activity level. **Detailed daily expectations are provided in each trip itinerary and trip information.**

ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS IN ITALY

Visitors to Italy will enjoy a more rewarding experience by understanding a few local customs and cultural expectations. Italians generally appreciate courtesy, friendly greetings, appropriate dress, and a respectful attitude toward their cultural heritage.

Italian life places considerable importance on personal relationships, family, food, and social interaction. Service in restaurants and cafés may be more leisurely than Americans are accustomed to, reflecting a cultural preference for enjoying meals without feeling rushed. Patience and politeness are always appreciated.

Greetings

A friendly greeting is customary when entering shops, approaching hotel staff, speaking with restaurant servers, or asking for assistance.

- **Buongiorno:** Good morning or good day
- **Buonasera:** Good evening
- **Arrivederci:** Goodbye
- **Per favore:** Please
- **Grazie:** Thank you
- **Prego:** You're welcome
- **Scusi:** Excuse me (formal/polite)

In tourist areas, English is widely understood, but beginning an interaction with a simple Italian greeting is appreciated and often encourages a warmer exchange.

Public Behavior

Italians are generally sociable and expressive, and animated conversation is a familiar part of daily life. Nevertheless, visitors should be considerate of others, particularly in churches, museums, hotels, and residential neighborhoods.

When visiting religious sites, **dress respectfully and observe any posted requirements** regarding covered shoulders, knees, photography, and silence.

Avoid sitting on historic monuments, fountains, or church steps where prohibited. Eating or drinking may also be restricted near certain landmarks and in designated historic areas.

When taking photographs, be considerate of worshippers, local residents, and other visitors. Some churches and museums restrict photography or prohibit flash.

In busy pedestrian areas, narrow streets, and markets, move to one side when stopping to take photographs or consult your phone.

Getting Someone's Attention

Begin with **"Buongiorno"** or **"Buonasera"** when approaching someone.

Use **"Scusi"** to politely get someone's attention, ask a question, or apologize for a minor inconvenience.

A courteous manner and a few words of Italian are greatly appreciated, even when communication continues in English.

Dining Customs

Dining is an important part of Italian culture, and meals are often enjoyed at a relaxed pace.

- Restaurant service may be slower than in the United States, particularly during leisurely lunches and dinners.
- The bill (*il conto*) is generally brought when requested rather than automatically at the end of a meal.
- Cappuccino is traditionally enjoyed in the morning, although visitors may order it at any time.
- Bread is commonly served alongside meals, and restaurants may charge a small cover fee (*coperto*).
- When dining independently, it is courteous to greet restaurant staff on arrival and thank them when leaving.

Respect for Local Communities

Italy's historic towns, villages, and neighborhoods are living communities, not simply visitor attractions.

Respect private property, follow posted regulations, and avoid blocking narrow streets or entrances when gathering with a group.

A little patience, flexibility, and genuine curiosity about local customs will contribute greatly to an enjoyable travel experience.