

# Italy Trip Travel Tips

## Baggage:

- You may take one large suitcase (a 26" or 28" size suitcase will probably be sufficient for your needs).
- The maximum weight for checked-in bags on flights to Europe is 50lbs. The maximum dimension of any bag is 62" (add the length + width + height). Try to stay under 50lbs, since you'll want to bring back souvenirs!
- Any excess luggage weight will incur a charge to be paid at the airport when you are checking in.
- Place nametags on the handles of your luggage. Make sure you place a nametag inside your bag (in case the outside tag is lost in transfer) that includes your name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- **You are also allowed to take along one carry-on bag and a personal item (small purse, for example).** Please remember that this carry-on must be small enough to either fit under your seat or in the overhead compartment.
- **You may carry limited quantities of liquids, gels and aerosols in your carry-on bag when going through security checkpoints.** Each container must be 3oz or smaller and be enclosed in only one, quart-size, Ziploc, clear plastic bag. **The rest of your toiletries etc. must go in your checked bag.**
- We advise taking trial size toiletry articles, cosmetics, medicines, slippers, jacket/sweater, camera, jewelry/valuables, and **a change of clothing** in your carry-on bag so you can be prepared if your large bag is delayed. It is also beneficial to pack an extra change of underwear, socks and an outfit in your traveling companion's (roommate) checked luggage as well, if possible.
- **For more information on the Transportation Security Administration's regulations, visit:**  
<http://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips>.

## Clothing:

- The temperatures in March range between 40-60 degrees F, depending on location. It will be colder up north in Venice and it may warm up as we travel south. Layering up is the best way to go. A jacket/hoodie, ball cap, hat, scarf, gloves should be enough; bring a portable umbrella.
- Dress throughout Italy is generally casual and comfortable. You will want a nicer outfit for our special dinner or evening out, but try to keep your wardrobe casual.
- Pack light by choosing clothing that is comfortable, *interchangeable*, and color-coordinated.
- **Give special attention to your SHOES.** A pair of broken-in walking shoes with low or flat heels and rubber soles will ensure your comfort while walking during the tour. *Flip flops are not recommended for touring.* We will be walking on uneven, unpaved ground at times and will need comfortable shoes/hiking boots. Students, dress as if you were at MVNU.
- Don't wear U.S. flag colors, political statements, or flags on your clothing or backpacks.

## Electrical Current:

- The current in Europe is 220 volts, 50 Hz. Check to see if your razor, curler, etc. is dual-voltage (110v-220v). American-made appliances (razors, hair dryers, curlers, flat-irons, etc.) that are only 110v, will burn out if used without a transformer.
- Carry a small electrical converter and adapter, which can be purchased in the luggage or travel department of most major retail department stores.

## Calling Home / Wi-Fi:

Most hotels have Wi-Fi, however, it may be restricted to the lobby and/or it may cost extra. Your options are:

- You can buy an international calling card once you arrive overseas. These are usually available in hotel gift shops and are much more reasonable than dialing directly from your hotel room (which could cost \$3+ a minute). Your local guide will be knowledgeable about where to purchase this card. Also, if calling this way, there will be a service charge assessed to your room, so be sure to clear this charge before leaving a particular hotel.
- You can depend on Wi-Fi and use <http://www.pinger.com>, a free iOS/Android app that will allow you to call/text home. You can buy minutes or watch videos to earn minutes. Currently 100 minutes cost \$1.99 / 400 = \$9.99 / 1000 = \$18.99

## Packing Tips & Checklist:

- See clothing, above.
- Pack heavy items, such as shoes and toiletry kits before the more delicate ones. Place them along the suitcase's spine to balance weight at the bottom.
- Roll t-shirts and polos rather than folding them. It saves room and reduces wrinkling.
- Hang clothing in the bathroom while showering to steam out wrinkles. You may want to stash a couple hangers in your suitcase.
- Stuff socks and rolled-up belts into shoes and boots to save space.
- Take along plastic bags for dirty laundry and wet swimsuits.
- Fold an empty soft bag on the bottom of your suitcase for delicate souvenirs.
- Take an ample supply of toiletry articles, cosmetics, a washcloth (these aren't usually supplied in hotels) and other personal items you use. A small spray bottle of saline solution can help you breathe better and keep your nostrils from drying out too much.
- **Carry any prescription and OTC medication you need for the duration of the trip in your carry-on.**
- Keep in mind liquids have a tendency to expand at higher altitudes, so make sure your bottles are only three-quarters full and have twist down caps.
- Place all your liquid and cream containers into plastic bags inside your luggage.
- You may want to bring a small amount of detergent for hand washing small articles of clothing if you need to.
- Ziploc bags and snack foods are good items to remember to bring.
- Bring your bathing suit in case you want to go swimming in any available hotel pools.
- A small bottle of Febreze works well in areas where people might have smoked, helps freshen up your clothes and also works as a bathroom deodorizer.
- Camera, charger, flash drives, memory cards, laptop/tablet, cables
- A small flashlight might come in handy.
- A small sewing kit
- A spare pair of glasses, just in case, and/or extra contact lenses
- Earphones
- A refillable water bottle you can carry with you while touring.
- If you're a student, bring your ID card. Sometimes you can get discounts.

## Health-related issues:

- Although there are no specific required immunizations, these need to be up to date. They include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR vaccine), diphtheria, tetanus, and polio. Please check with your physician for further details.
- The busy touring schedule, dietary changes, jet lag, and fatigue place heavy demands on your system. Leisure time is built into the tour, and we suggest using it as a resting period.
- We recommend a small supply of decongestants or antibiotics in case you catch a virus or cold.
- A sleeping pill may be beneficial during the long overseas flight as you adjust to the time change.
- You may want to bring along some *Imodium A-D* if you are prone to an upset stomach from changes in water, irregular sleep, etc. A laxative might come in handy in case of constipation.
- **Drink plenty of water** in order to help adjust your sleeping rhythms right away and to keep your body hydrated.

## Passport/Customs:

- **Your passport must always be with you. Never in your luggage! That is your most important document. A money belt can be worn around your waste under your shirt for cash/passport.**
- There are no visa requirements to visit Italy.
- Residents of the United States are required to declare the full retail price of all articles purchased abroad.
- On your return flight, you will receive a customs declaration form. Fill it out in full.
- You are allowed to import \$800 of merchandise duty free (based on the retail price) into the United States.
- Most articles you purchase in excess of your exemption but under \$1,800 will be assessed a tax at the flat rate of 10%.

## Money:

- **Euro** notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros.
  - Euro coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, & 50 cents, and 1 and 2 Euros.
- We recommend buying some Euros to have for the first couple of days. Around €100 should be enough. Students ask Prof. Donnelly at MVNU or contact your local bank.
- **Credit/Debit cards:** ATMs are available to obtain local currency. Larger shops will accept your personal checks and/or major credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard (but usually not American Express or Discover Card). However, you should check with your bank concerning their charges for overseas transactions. **For security reasons, prior to the trip you should also inform your credit/debit card companies that you are traveling overseas and give them the dates and countries you will visit.** Many credit/debit card companies will automatically decline purchases made overseas unless you have alerted them about your travel plans.
- If you're thinking about getting a credit card, we recommend the **Capital One Venture One** card since it doesn't charge you foreign transaction fees and it doesn't have an annual fee.
- Major purchases should be made with credit cards to get the best rates (MasterCard & VISA are the most widely accepted). Local currency may be needed for lunches, gratuities and small items such as snacks and drinks.
- Due to the new "chip & PIN" technology some places may not accept cards with only a magnetic strip.
- Debit cards with a PIN number are widely accepted but not gift cards (a VISA, MasterCard gift card won't work). Do not bring traveler's checks.