

Italy Travel Tips

The following is a list of useful information about travel to Italy

TRAVEL DATES:

You are expected to arrive in the FCO (Fiumicino International Airport in Rome) in the morning of June 6th ; The majority of flights coming from the US arrive in the morning.

Transfer from FCO to Assisi will arrive early afternoon, probably at 1PM. Once all participants confirm their flights arrival, the transfer departure time will be confirmed and shared with everyone.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK?

In Italy the dress code is casual but you may want to pack a nice dress for a special outing during your stay in Italy. Remember, less is more when packing. We will be walking from

the hotel to some sites in Assisi and Cortona, so packing light is a smart choice. Keep in mind that the weather in Italy may be warm (70-80 F) at this time of the year (late spring) in the but it may vary, and drop to mid 60s, therefore we suggest a jacket just in case the nights get colder, especially when the group walks at the night as per the retreat's agenda or on your own. June is not a rainy season, but some light rain may occur.

You should plan to dress in layers to add or remove according to the temperature. Some essentials we suggest:

- **Walking shoes, sneakers**
- **Wind and waterproof jacket, hat or cap, rain poncho**
- **Swimsuit if you plan to take advantage of the hotel spa on your own**
- **Personal medications and prescription eyeglasses**
- **Small backpack**
- **Binoculars**

- **Sunglasses and sunscreen**
- **Calculator or currency converter - if you have a smart phone, there's an app for that**
- **Camera with charger or extra batteries, and plugs and converters**
- **Travel Insurance certificate, if you've purchased insurance (highly recommended)**
- **Passport and money**
- **A copy of the picture page of your passport – keep separate from your passport**
- **Electric converter**

PASSPORTS

ALL travelers (regardless of nationality) must carry a passport, valid for at least six (6) months after your intended return date to your home country. Two pages must be available for the entry stamp. If you hold a passport with an expiration date less than six (6) months after

your return date, you must renew your passport prior to departure.

If you are not a U.S. Citizen, your National Consulate or Embassy can answer any questions you may have regarding the individual travel documents required. You can find a worldwide index of Embassies for Italy via the web at: <http://www.embassyworld.com>.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU WILL BE EXTENDING YOUR TRIP TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, YOU SHOULD CHECK WITH THE CONSULATE OF THAT COUNTRY TO ESTABLISH IF A VISA OR ANY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION WILL BE REQUIRED.

AIRPORT CHECK IN

Strict security measures at the airport may impact your travel plans and cause delays, which is why it is important that you allow plenty of time to get to the airport and check in at least three (3) hours prior to your flight's departure

time. Due to constant changes of flight schedules, it is highly recommended that you confirm your flight's status before you leave for the airport.

Please take note of the check-in policies, carry-on restrictions and airport security rules that may impact your travel plans. Due to the fact that these security measures change regularly, we suggest that you visit the following website for the most up-to-date information: <http://www.tsa.gov>.

PLEASE NOTE: THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REQUIRES AIRLINES TO SOLICIT EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FOR U.S. PASSENGERS TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY. PLEASE BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER UPON CHECK IN.

LUGGAGE

The luggage restrictions may vary among different airlines, please check this information before packing. When going to Europe you may be only allowed one personal item (eg., small handbag or laptop case) and one bag to be checked in (usually 23Kg). Check with your airlines company, prior to your trip.

Be sure to pack the essentials in your carry-on bag, such as your airline tickets, passport, a light change of clothing, any valuables, medications, toiletries, and perhaps a book or a snack.

Although regulations have recently changed, the TSA still recommends that sharp objects be placed in your checked luggage. It's not just the obvious items, but includes such innocuous items as razors for shaving, nail files, Swiss army knives, and corkscrews. Lighters and matches, or any type of scissors (e.g., from a sewing kit or first aid kit) should also be packed in your checked luggage.

Additionally, liquids and gels are forbidden as carry-on items unless they are under three (3) ounces and declared by showing them in a plastic, one-quart bag. A few exceptions to this rule apply and include diabetic glucose medications such as insulin, baby formula, and prescription liquid medications labeled with a name that matches the passenger's ticket. These items must be declared to the transportation security officers at the security checkpoint. Beverages and other items purchased in the secure boarding area may be brought onto the aircraft.

Laptop computers must still be screened separately at the security checkpoint, but will be allowed on board the aircraft.

LOST LUGGAGE

In the event that one of your bags goes astray, you'll want to file a Baggage Claim Report before passing through customs at the airport.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

The following general information has been provided only as a guideline. Please consult your personal physician for his or her advice based on your health history and current situation. Make sure you are in good health for walking in Assisi and Cortona, you may expect to walk around 1 hour per day with the group on streets, mild-moderate effort.

Although Italy doesn't required vaccinations, ALL TRAVELERS should make sure that your standard adult immunizations and "boosters" are up to date. Additional vaccines are not necessary.

TIME ZONE

In June, Italy will be 6 hours ahead Eastern Daylight Time. If it's 1:00 p.m. in New York City, it is 7PM in Italy.

COMMUNICATIONS

Phone

Private mobile phones may be used in Italy although reception may vary, and charges may be high. If you plan to use your cell phone be sure to confirm with your wireless provider that you have an international calling plan and advise them that you will be traveling to Peru. In addition, all hotels have land lines with phones in the rooms. We suggest you use Skype, email or facetime to communicate with friends, family and work back home utilizing free hotel Wi-Fi.

If family and friends need to contact you during the program, phone numbers will be provided to all participants prior to the trip in addition to the Hotel Giotto's phone numbers: +39 075.812209

<http://www.hotelgiottoassisi.it/en/home-2/>

The international prefix and country code for Italy is 39. To call an Italian number from abroad, dial the country code before the 8-digit phone number. If you are calling from the USA or Canada you will also need to dial 011, prior to dialing the number.

INTERNET

There is free Wi-Fi available at the Hotel Giotto to connect laptops, mobile phones, etc. Be aware that internet and Wi-Fi quality cannot be guaranteed as high quality all the time.

ELECTRONICS

Italy has 220 volts, (North America operates at 110-120 volts and the electricity is generated at 60 Hertz). And an adapter is required. If you need an adapter/converter, please bring your own with you.

Important: If your home supply is 110 volts and your electrical equipment does not have a

110/220 or 110/240 switch on it, you will need to get a voltage converter to step the Italian 220 volts down to 110 volts. These are best purchased in your home country. Electronics you should check are your phone charger, camera chargers, electric tooth brush, traveling clothes irons, hair curlers, shavers, hair dryers, laptop chargers etc. Many of these devices are “dual” voltage meaning they operate either at 110v or 220/240v. There should be a label on the appliance advising that it is capable of dual voltage, (if not or in doubt don't use it).

FOOD IN ITALY

The food in Italy is varied, natural and delicious! It is very similar to what is found in the US. Special diets, (e.g. vegetarian, gluten free) may be accommodated if requested in good time, but variety is not guaranteed.

WATER SAFETY

Bottled water will be included at all of our meals and all of our group functions. While the water is clean, the microbes are different from what we are used to and bottled water is suggested for drinking.

FOR YOUR PROTECTION

Remember, neither the airlines nor the hotels will take responsibility for lost or stolen valuables. We suggest that you simply not bring valuables, such as expensive jewelry, with you. If you feel you need to, pack them in your carry-on bag and when you arrive they can be stored in your room's safe. While touring or shopping leave your passport and the bulk of your money in the safe. Take with you only the money you intend to spend. Carry a copy of the picture page of your passport with you as you may need it in case your passport is lost.

THE LANGUAGE

The traditional Italian language (no dialect) is spoken in Assisi and Cortona. In many areas we will visit, the people in shops and hotels understand English. In addition, you will be accompanied throughout the trip by Siglia and Lydie who will be ready to assist you at all times.

SHOPPING IN ITALY

Italy is one of the top shopping destinations in Europe. The currency is Euros. Most shops, malls, and handicraft markets are open every day, they accept cash and credit cards especially Visa and American Express.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Upon Departing for Italy

Although unlikely you will have any problems with this matter but the retreat team suggests

that if you have just bought a new and expensive digital camera, camcorder, watch, laptop computer or similar item, it will be worth your while to stop at the Customs Office at your international departure airport and register these items. It usually does not take much time and will save you from the possibility of delays and/or having to pay duty on these items on the return home.

Returning from Italy

Per the norm, you will need to declare everything that you may have bought in Italy or did not take with you when you left your home country. Of course, how much you will be permitted to bring home under “duty free” status varies by country and is often determined by the length of your trip. For those traveling from outside of the United States, it is wise to confirm details with the Customs personnel at your departure airport or contact your local Consulate prior to your departure.

Each U.S. citizen may bring back \$800.00 USD worth of “duty free” items (a maximum of \$1,600.00 USD per household) as long as they are in your possession or brought back as accompanied baggage. Duty will be waived on items that you mail home to yourself, if the value is \$200.00 USD or less. Antiques that are at least 100 years old and fine art are considered “duty free.”

Citizens who individually declare between \$800.00 USD and \$1,000.00 USD will be charged a duty on the amount over \$800.00 USD (up to \$1,000.00 USD) by Customs officials at the first point of entry, so remember to keep your receipts handy. The \$800.00 USD “duty free” exemption may include 200 cigarettes (1 carton) or 100 cigars and, if you are over the age of 21, one (1) liter (33.8 ounces) of an alcoholic beverage (beer, wine, liquor, etc.).

PLEASE NOTE: IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND HOW TO TAKE CASH ADVANCES OUT ON YOUR CREDIT CARD PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE.

ALSO LET YOUR BANK AND CREDIT CARD COMPANY KNOW THAT YOU WILL BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO AVOID BLOCKING YOUR PURCHASES WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD.

ATM Transactions

ATM machines usually can be found adjacent to many banks and near busy public places, such as airports, train stations and in shopping centers. You may withdraw cash using major credit cards or Cirrus, Visa Electron or Plus debit cards with a 4-digit PIN. Banking fees for ATM withdrawals and foreign transactions vary widely, so please check the rates with your bank(s).

TIPPING

Tips vary in Italy depending on the level of service rendered at restaurants and usually it is already included. Taxis don't need to be tipped. For our driver to Cortona we may tip as a courtesy.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

The retreat team strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance* before this trip! Travel insurance offers coverage for unforeseen problems, from a cancelled flight to a serious illness—or in rare cases, even an act of terrorism or the financial default of a travel supplier. If you miss a travel connection, even for reasons beyond your control, you are NOT necessarily protected from financial loss unless you have travel insurance. For example, if you encounter mechanical problems, flight delays, or inclement weather that causes you to miss connections, the airline might re-book you, although in many cases (such as bad weather)

it is NOT guaranteed (in which case you may either have to purchase an entirely new round-trip ticket or forego the entire prepaid trip without any reimbursement). Travel insurance can cover new flights or provide trip cancellation coverage (for a covered loss), as well as emergency medical expenses and medical transportation. Travel insurance also provides 24-hour “911” emergency travel service, in case a traveler has to change a flight or a hotel room, in addition to assistance with emergency cash transfers, lost baggage, and pre-trip consultation services (travel advisories, passport requirements, inoculation information, etc.).

HOW TO PURCHASE TRAVEL INSURANCE

Although it is not part of the retreat, our team suggest that You obtain travel insurance from Travel Guard International. To view the various policies offered, log onto (<https://mvp.travelguard.com/>) . You will have two options to purchase travel insurance: 1. US and

Canadian residents may call Travel Guard directly at 1-800- 826-1300. 2. Visit Travel Guard's website at Travel Guard Insurance (<https://mvp.travelguard.com/>) to process the insurance yourself. Please be sure to read all policy information thoroughly and note that if you have a pre-existing condition you must apply for the insurance within 14 days of the trip deposit date.

* Please note that Travel Guard insurance is only available to US and Canadian residents at this time. If you live elsewhere, please check for such coverage within your home country from independent providers.