



IPDPS 2009 – 25-29 May – Rome, Italy Basic Tourist Guide for IPDPS Attendees

(Adapted from links on IPDPS Web – Visit www.ipdps.org for details)

Dos and Don'ts:

- **Coffee Etiquette:** Italian breakfast consists of a pastry and a cappuccino or shot of espresso. If eaten outside of home (or your hotel), breakfast is always consumed standing up at the local bar. An espresso is not sipped; it is downed in one gulp. Cappuccino is generally a morning drink and is not drunk after noon by real Italians. A post-dinner espresso, however, is common practice.
- **Dinner Rules:** It is expected for guests to arrive for dinner reservations at least fifteen minutes late. In many restaurants, printed menus are for tourists. Regular patrons know to ask for the daily specials, which typically feature the freshest ingredients. Bread, when served, is rarely accompanied by butter or olive oil.
- **Drink the Water:** Rome has plenty of public water fountains, and real Romans (and their dogs) always drink from them. To drink directly from the fountain, plug the spout with your finger, which forces the water to shoot out of a smaller opening higher on the spout (an early version of the modern water fountain). Many people also refill their water bottles from these fountains (or at your hotel).
- **Mind the Traffic:** Unless there's a traffic light or you are in a crosswalk, don't expect cars to stop for you; they won't. Interestingly for a car-crazy city, crosswalks are obeyed. Pedestrians always have the right of way in a crosswalk, even when it doesn't seem possible. Still, it only makes good sense to proceed with caution.
- **Money:** Always have some euros with you: Most major hotels, restaurants, and shops take credit cards, but many smaller operations either will balk at credit cards for smaller purchases or do not accept credit cards at all. ATMs are available around the city and at the airports. Note that various U.S. banks and credit card companies now charge an extra fee for individual credit-card purchases overseas; check with your provider for its policy.
- **It's All About Soccer:** Roman men—indeed most Italian men—are passionate about their soccer. Arm yourself with some knowledge of Italy's soccer scene—in particular the doings of Rome's two big teams, Lazio and AS Roma—and you'll find ready conversation partners almost everywhere.
- **Enjoy the City's Chaos:** Rome can seem chaotic, with people shouting to each other, traffic racing everywhere, and cars parked in the most unlikely spots. There is, however, a system to much of this apparent anarchy, honed over centuries.

Phrase Book:

Italian is a phonetic language—words are pronounced the way they are written, and no letters are silent. Take note: "gl" is pronounced "ly" (as in "tagliatelle"), "gn" is pronounced "ny" (as in "gnocchi"), "gi" is pronounced like "j" ("pomeriggio" is pom-e-RI-jo), "ce" or "ci" are pronounced "ch" ("piacere" is pi-a-CHE-re), and "ch" is pronounced like "k" ("bruschetta" is brus-SKEH-ttah). For more helpful pronunciation and wording tips, visit www.learn-italian-language-software.com/phrases/FSItalian.htm.

Buon giorno: Hello (daytime)

Buon pomeriggio: Hello (afternoon)

Buona sera: Hello (evening)

Buona notte: Good night.

Quanto costa questo?: How much does this cost?

Grazie: Thank you.

Dove é...?: Where is...?

Come si chiama?: What is your name?

Come sta?: How are you?

Piacere: Pleasure to meet you.

Avete?: Do you have?

Posso prenotare un tavolo?: May I reserve a table?

Posso usare il bagno?: May I use the restroom?

Non so: I don't know.

Non parlo Italiano: I don't speak Italian.

Come arrivo a...?: How do I get to...?

Scusi: Excuse me.

Dove posso trovare...?: Where can I find...?

ADDITIONAL TIPS TO ASSURE YOUR SAFETY WHILE VISITING ROME

(1) COMPROMISING YOUR SAFETY WITH YOUR MONEY

One problem is the incidence of pick pocketing that exists. It is particularly prevalent on crowded metros and in popular tourist domains. Therefore, it is necessary to always keep an eye on your bag. Some people feel more at ease by wearing safely concealed money belts. In any case it is wise not to carry a large amount of money or credit cards on you. Many of these pick pocketers are street people who may lull you in a false sense of security since they are usually women and children. A child handing you a rose may melt your heart, but once you take that rose, an adult will suddenly appear demanding payment. There is a notorious **bus link n.64** which is infamous as a target for pick pocketers and purse snatchers. Thus, avoid this bus at all costs. Lastly **avoid Termini station late at night**, as it will be occupied by undesirables and its level of safety will be low. During the day the station is filled with commuters and is relatively safe. Many of the locals are extremely canny in dealing with a 'novice' of their culture. A foreigner is often easy to detect and the reality is your monetary contribution will often derive unwanted interest. Be aware of your surroundings at all times and be prepared to encounter and handle situations where illicit dealings may take place.

(2) CHANGING MONEY FROM UNKNOWN MONEY CHANGERS ON THE STREET

The best way to convert to euros is to use your credit card for purchases or at an ATM for cash. However done, the best idea is to shop around if possible. Money changers – especially those in stations and airports – can charge a commission in excess of 10%. This commission is also often not evident to the public. To avoid this problem, arrive at the airport with enough euros to get you to your hotel. If in doubt of any extra charges, don't hesitate to ask. If someone approaches you on the street offering excellent exchange rates (specifically for you) keep walking.

(3) TAKING ILLEGAL, UNMARKED TAXIS

Rome like many big cities is infamous for overcharging of cab fares, especially for unsuspecting tourists. There are a large proportion of illegal unmarked taxis that are on the road. Thus, make sure you always enter a cab that is registered and has a meter. If the cab does not have a meter, make sure you negotiate your price before accepting the ride. Strategically negotiating the price BEFORE you enter the vehicle is more viable. Note that taxis from the airport are usually legal, but still may charge exorbitant fees if you do not negotiate before you ride. A usual rate to the Palazzo Carpegna is 40 euros, and there are more economical options as described on the IPDPS Travel Tips page.

(4) ON THE STREET DEALING WITH...

- FORCEFUL STREET VENDORS
- UNOFFICIAL TOUR GUIDES
- COSTUMED GLADIATORS

The best advice is to avoid any contact and to ignore and walk away. Should you get involved, such as allowing a photo with the costumed gladiator, be prepared to pay. In that case, at least ask how much before you proceed.

(5) APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR & DRESS

Walking in Rome is indeed the best way to see all the sights and follow the tourist trail. Rome is often congested with traffic, which makes the exercise of walking an easier option. Most of what you see and do in Rome will be experienced on foot; thus it is wise to invest in shoes that are comfortable. Note that Romans do not wear shorts, so long pants for men are best. To be comfortable when touring Rome, clothing that can be layered is advisable. For women during warmer weather, longer skirts and capris along with sleeveless tops for outside with a large scarf or a lightweight shirt (with sleeves) for churches will do fine.

(6) BUYING WATER FROM STREET CARTS OR RESTAURANTS

It is always a good idea to take a water bottle along with you, as you will need to replenish to avoid possible dehydration. Purchasing water from snack carts and restaurants can prove to be a costly exercise. A good option is to purchase water from a supermarket. If you carry an empty bottle on you though, there are plenty of places in Rome where you can always fill up. Generally speaking, public watering places are very safe in Rome. If you are unsure look out for the term Non Potabile, which means non drinkable water.