

50 Essential Italian Phrases

Everything you need for your first days in Italy

for English speakers

WHAT IS INSIDE

- 50 phrases you will actually use
- Grouped by real situation
- Notes where the register matters
- Italian audio for every phrase
- Print and mobile editions
- Linked to the free lessons



How to use this book

What you will learn

This is not a list to memorise. It is 50 phrases arranged in the order you meet them: the first group gets you through your first hour in Italy, the last groups cover the situations of your first weeks.

Work through one group at a time. Say every phrase out loud once before moving on — Italian rewards this more than most languages, because what you read is what you say.

Listen and say it

A triangle before a phrase means a native Italian recording exists for it. The audio pack uses the same numbering as this book.



Free lessons, audio and a word every day on the website.

<https://www.imparitaliano.com/en>

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Your first words

Five of these will carry you through your first day in Italy.

- 1 ▶ **Ciao!**
Hi/Bye!
Informal only — with friends, never with a shopkeeper you have just met.
- 2 ▶ **Buongiorno!**
Good morning/day!
The safe default until early afternoon. Use it entering any shop or bar.
- 3 ▶ **Buonasera!**
Good evening!
From mid-afternoon on; varies by region.
- 4 ▶ **Arrivederci!**
Goodbye!
Formal
- 5 ▶ **A presto!**
See you soon!
- 6 ▶ **Sì, certo!**
Yes, of course!
- 7 ▶ **No, grazie.**
No, thank you.

Meeting someone

The exchange that starts every conversation, in both the informal and the polite form.

- 8 ▶ **Come ti chiami?**
What's your name?
Informal. The polite version is *Come si chiama?* — use it with anyone older or working.
- 9 ▶ **Mi chiamo Marco.**
My name is Marco.
- 10 ▶ **Come si chiama?**
What's your name?
Formal
- 11 ▶ **Piacere di conoscerti!**
Nice to meet you!
Informal
- 12 ▶ **Di dove sei?**
Where are you from?
Informal
- 13 ▶ **Abito a Roma.**
I live in Rome.

- 14 ▶ **Quanti anni hai?**
How old are you?
- 15 ▶ **Ho venticinque anni.**
I'm 25 years old.
Italian HAS years, it is not years. Never say sono venticinque anni.

When you do not understand

The most useful phrases in the book. Say them early and Italians will slow down.

- 16 ▶ **Non capisco.**
I don't understand.
- 17 ▶ **Puoi ripetere?**
Can you repeat?
Informal
- 18 ▶ **Non lo so.**
I don't know.
- 19 ▶ **Come si dice "hello" in italiano?**
How do you say "hello" in Italian?
- 20 ▶ **Va bene!**
Okay! / All right!
- 21 ▶ **Sto bene, grazie.**
I'm fine, thanks.

Café and restaurant

Order like a local: Italians say what they want, then per favore.

- 22 ▶ **Vorrei un caffè, per favore.**
I'd like a coffee, please.
Un caffè is an espresso. Ask for a caffè americano if you want it long.
- 23 ▶ **Prendo un cappuccino.**
I'll have a cappuccino.
Italians stop drinking cappuccino after breakfast. Nobody will refuse you, but it is noticed.
- 24 ▶ **Un espresso, grazie.**
An espresso, thanks.
- 25 ▶ **Posso vedere il menù?**
Can I see the menu?
- 26 ▶ **Cosa mi consiglia?**
What do you recommend?
- 27 ▶ **Il conto, per favore.**
The bill, please.

- 28 ▶ **Quanto costa?**
How much does it cost?
- 29 ▶ **Posso pagare con la carta?**
Can I pay by card?
- 30 ▶ **Era tutto buonissimo!**
Everything was delicious!

Getting around

Start every question to a stranger with Scusi — it changes how you are answered.

- 31 ▶ **Scusi, dov'è la stazione?**
Excuse me, where is the station?
- 32 ▶ **Come arrivo al centro?**
How do I get to the center?
- 33 ▶ **È lontano da qui?**
Is it far from here?
- 34 ▶ **Vai sempre dritto.**
Go straight ahead.
- 35 ▶ **Gira a destra al semaforo.**
Turn right at the traffic light.
- 36 ▶ **Dove posso comprare il biglietto?**
Where can I buy a ticket?
- 37 ▶ **A che ora parte il prossimo treno?**
What time does the next train leave?

Shopping

In small Italian shops you greet first and browse second.

- 38 ▶ **Sto solo guardando, grazie.**
I'm just looking, thanks.
- 39 ▶ **Cerco una maglietta blu.**
I'm looking for a blue t-shirt.
- 40 ▶ **Posso provarlo?**
Can I try it on?
- 41 ▶ **Quanto costa questo?**
How much does this cost?
- 42 ▶ **Lo prendo.**
I'll take it.

If something goes wrong

Learn these five before you need them. Emergency number in Italy: 112.

- 43 ▶ **Aiuto!**
Help!
- 44 ▶ **Ho bisogno di un medico.**
I need a doctor.
- 45 ▶ **Mi sento male.**
I feel sick.
- 46 ▶ **Ho perso il mio passaporto.**
I lost my passport.
- 47 ▶ **Chiami un'ambulanza!**
Call an ambulance!

Small talk

Three phrases that turn a transaction into a conversation.

- 48 ▶ **Che tempo fa oggi?**
What's the weather like today?
- 49 ▶ **Ci vediamo alle otto davanti al cinema.**
See you at eight in front of the cinema.
- 50 ▶ **Mi dispiace, non posso.**
I'm sorry, I can't.

Five minutes of practice

Do these once and the phrases stop being a list.

In real life

Cover the right-hand column. Read the Italian and say the meaning out loud. Mark the five you hesitate on and only revise those.

In real life

Cover the Italian instead. Harder, and the one that matters: producing is not recognising.

In real life

Pick one group and write a six-line conversation using only phrases from it. It does not need to be clever, it needs to be yours.

In real life

Play the audio for one group and repeat each phrase in the gap. Match the rhythm before you worry about the sounds.

In real life

Tomorrow, before opening the book, write down every phrase you remember from one group. What you cannot recall is your real study list.

Where to go next

These phrases get you through a trip. If you want to build the grammar underneath them, the A1 Complete Starter Pack takes you from these sentences to making your own.

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