



U.S. MILITARY RETIREE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN ITALY

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USMRA-SI

PUBLIC SERVICE BULLETIN

23 June 2001

Source: U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT. <http://travel.state.gov/italy.html>

Italy - Consular Information Sheet

April 18, 2001

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Italy is a developed democracy with a modern economy. Tourist facilities are widely available. Additional information may be obtained from [the Italian Government Tourist Board](#) by telephone at 212-245-5618 or via the Internet: <http://www.enit.it>.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A passport is required. A visa is not required for tourist stays up to three months. For further information concerning entry requirements for Italy, travelers may contact [the Embassy of Italy](#) at 1601 Fuller St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Tel: 202-328-5500 or via the Internet: <http://www.italyemb.org>, or the Italian Consulates General in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, or San Francisco.

Those tourists planning to stay other than in hotels for more than one month should register with the local police station within eight days of arrival in Italy. Visitors to Italy may be required to demonstrate to the police upon arrival sufficient financial means to support themselves while in Italy. Credit cards, ATM cards, traveler's checks, prepaid hotel/vacation vouchers, etc. can be used to show sufficient means.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

DUAL NATIONALITY: U.S. citizens who were born in Italy and/or who are also Italian citizens may be subject to compulsory military service and other laws that impose special obligations upon them while in Italy. Those who might be affected should inquire at an Italian embassy or consulate outside Italy regarding their status before traveling. In some instances, dual nationality may hamper U.S. Government efforts to provide protection abroad. For additional information, see [the Consular Affairs home page](#) on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov> for [our Dual Nationality flyer](#).

SAFETY/SECURITY: There have been occasional episodes of violence in Italy, most often connected to Italian internal developments or social issues. In 1997 and 1998, Italian authorities found bombs outside public buildings, received bomb threats and were themselves the subjects of letter bombs, all of which were ascribed to organized crime or anarchist movements. Americans were not targeted or injured in any of these instances.

CRIME: Italy has a low rate of violent crime, little of which is directed toward tourists. Petty crimes such as pickpocketing, theft from parked cars, and purse snatching, however, are serious problems, especially in large cities. Most reported thefts occur at crowded tourist sites, on public buses or trains, or at the major railway stations, including Rome's Termini, Milan's Centrale, Florence's Santa Maria Novella, and Naples' Centrale. Clients of Internet cafes in major cities have

been targeted. Elderly tourists who have tried to resist petty thieves on motor scooters have suffered broken arms and collarbones. To reduce the chance of becoming a victim, do not carry a wallet or purse if possible. Carry shoulder bags tightly under your arm with the clasp facing your body. Wear waist packs in the front, but be aware that thieves can slit them open without you noticing. Leave extra cash, credit cards, and personal documents in a hotel safe. Carry photocopies of passports and financial documents separately from the originals.

Thieves in Italy often work in groups or pairs. In most cases, one thief distracts a victim while an accomplice performs the robbery. Groups of street urchins are known to poke tourists with newspapers or pieces of cardboard to divert their attention so that another street urchin can pickpocket them. In one particular routine, one thief throws trash or waste at the victim; a second thief assists the victim in cleaning up the mess; and the third discreetly takes the victim's belongings. Criminals on crowded public transportation slit the bottoms of purses or bags with a razor blade or sharp knife, then remove the contents. Theft of small items such as radios, luggage, cameras, briefcases, and even cigarettes from parked cars is a major problem. Robbers in southern Italy take items from cars at gas stations often by smashing car windows. In the Naples area, thefts have also been reported from occupied vehicles waiting in traffic or stopped at traffic lights. To discourage this kind of theft, drivers should keep their car doors locked, windows rolled up, and valuables out of sight. Do not leave valuables in an unattended vehicle. Tourists should immediately report thefts or other crimes to the local police.

In a scam practiced on the highway between Rome and Naples, one thief punctures the tire of a rental or out-of-town car. An accomplice signals the flat tire to the driver and encourages the driver to pull over. When the driver stops, one thief helps change the tire, while the other takes the driver's belongings. Avoid driving at night on highways in southern Italy. When stopping at service areas on the highway (Autostrada), make sure your parked car remains in sight. One person should remain in the car, partly because thieves sometimes mark unattended vehicles to make them identifiable. The marked vehicle is later followed by accomplices who use one of the aforementioned schemes to perpetrate a robbery. There have been occasional reports of break-ins of rental cars driven by Americans in northern Italy when the precautions mentioned above were not followed during stops at highway service areas.

In a scam practiced on trains, primarily in northern Italy, one or more persons will befriend a traveler and offer drugged food or drink. Also, thieves have been known to impersonate police officers to gain the confidence of tourists. The thief shows the prospective victim a circular plastic sign with the words "police" or "international police." If this happens, the tourist should insist on seeing the officer's identification card (documento), as impersonators tend not to carry forged documents.

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. U.S. citizens can refer to the Department of State's pamphlet [A Safe Trip Abroad](#) for ways to promote a more trouble-free journey. The pamphlet is available by mail from [the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office](#), Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs, or via [the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page](#) at <http://travel.state.gov>.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND INSURANCE: Medical facilities are available, but may be limited outside urban areas. Public hospitals sometimes do not maintain the same standards as hospitals in the United States, so travelers are encouraged to obtain insurance that would cover a stay in a private Italian hospital or clinic. It is almost impossible to obtain an itemized hospital bill from public hospitals, as required by many U.S. insurance companies, because the Italian National Health Service charges all-in-one rates that include care services, bed and board.

The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. U.S. medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased.

Further, U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. However, many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the U.S. may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties, whereas travelers who have purchased overseas medical insurance have, when a medical emergency occurs, found it life-saving. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure [Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad](#), available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page or autofax: (202) 647-3000.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION: Travelers should always carry a prescription for any prescription drug they are taking and should know the generic name of the drug. Most prescription drugs available in the U.S. can also be found in Italy. If you are taking an unusual medicine that is difficult to find even in the United States, we suggest that you bring an ample supply of the medicine with you when you travel. Mailing prescription drugs to Italy is time-consuming and complicated.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's international traveler's hotline at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or by visiting [the CDC Internet home page](http://www.cdc.gov) at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Italy is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: Good

Urban Road Condition/Maintenance: Fair

Rural Road Condition/Maintenance: Good

Availability of Roadside Assistance: Excellent

Streets in the cities are often narrow, winding, and congested; lane markings are often nonexistent; traffic lights are limited and often disobeyed; and a different convention on right-of-way is observed. Italy has over 5,600 km. (3,480 mi.) of "Autostrada," or superhighways. Many drivers travel and pass on these well-maintained roads at high speeds. In rural areas, a wide range of speed on highways makes for hazardous driving. Roads are generally narrow and often do not have guardrails. Travelers in northern Italy, especially in winter, should be aware of ground fog and poor visibility, which cause numerous multiple-car accidents each year. Most Italian-specification automobiles are equipped with special fog lights. Roadside assistance in Italy is excellent on the well-maintained toll roads but limited on secondary roads.

For specific information concerning Italy's drivers' licenses, vehicle inspection, road tax and mandatory insurance, contact [the Italian Government Tourist Board](#) (ENIT) offices via the Internet at: <http://www.enit.com>, tel. 212-245-4822 or the A.C.I. (Automobile Club Italiano) at Via Magenta 5, 00185 Rome. Tel: 39-06-4477. For information on obtaining international drivers' licenses, contact AAA or the American Automobile Touring Alliance.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Italy's Civil Aviation Authority as Category 1 -- in compliance with international aviation safety standards for oversight of Italy's air carrier operations. For further information, travelers may contact the Department of Transportation within the U.S. at 1-800-322-7873, or visit [the FAA Internet website](http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/) at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/>. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) separately assesses some foreign air carriers for suitability as official providers of air services. For information regarding the DOD policy on specific carriers, travelers may contact the DOD at (618) 229-4801.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: Italian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Italy of items such as professional equipment, commercial samples, advertising materials and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. Tax-free shopping rules are strictly enforced. Be sure you have read and understood all the procedures and conditions regarding refunds before purchasing any item. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Italy in Washington or one of Italy's Consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. The U.S. Customs Service may impose corresponding import restrictions in accordance with [the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act](#). (Contact the Customs Service at 202-927-2336 or Internet <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/culprop> for further information).

Italy's customs authorities encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet. [ATA Carnet Headquarters](#), located at the [U.S. Council for International Business](#), 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA Carnet in the United States. For additional information call (212) 354-4480, send an e-mail to atacarnet@uscib.org, or visit <http://www.uscib.org> for details.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Italian law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Italy are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: [For information on international adoption of children and international parental child abduction](#), please refer to our Internet site at http://travel.state.gov/children's_issues.html or telephone (202) 736-7000.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY AND CONSULATE LOCATIONS: Americans living in or visiting Italy are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Rome or at one of the three U.S. consulates general and obtain updated information on travel and security within Italy.

[The U.S. Embassy in Rome, Italy](#) is located at Via V. Veneto 119/A. Tel: 39-06-46741 and fax: 39-06-4674-2217. Internet address: <http://www.usis.it>.

The U.S. Consulates are located in:

Florence, at Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci 38. Tel: 39-055-239-8276/7/8/9, or 39-055-217-605;
fax: 39-055-284-088.

Milan, at Via Principe Amedeo 2/10. Tel: 39-02-290-351 and fax: 39-02-290-35-273.

Naples, at Piazza della Repubblica. Tel: 39-081-583-8111 and fax: 39-081-761-1804.

There are U.S. Consular Agents located in:

Genoa, at Via Dante 2. Tel: 39-010-584-492 and fax: 39-010-553-3033.

Palermo, at Via Vaccarini 1. Tel: 39-091-305-857
and fax 39-091-625-6026.

Trieste, at Via Roma 15. Tel: 39-040-660-177 and fax 39-040-631-240.

This replaces the Consular Information Sheet dated September 8, 2000 to update the information
on Entry Requirements, Medical Insurance and Customs Regulations.