

*Conversational Italian
for Travelers*

Just the Important Phrases

(with Restaurant Vocabulary
and Idiomatic Expressions)

Kathryn Occhipinti


Stella *Lucente*

Conversational Italian for Travelers Just the Important Phrases
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Copyright © October 2014, by Kathryn Occhipinti

International Standard Book Number: 978-0-9903834-2-0

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Cover Photograph: Entrance to Piazza San Marco, Venezia
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Internet: www.StellaLucente.com or www.Learntravelitalian.com

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Peoria, IL 61612

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The Italian Alphabet

The Italian alphabet has only 21 letters, but there are names in Italian for all of the Latin letters, including those traditionally described as foreign to Italian. The letters that are foreign to Italian are listed in parenthesis and are included together with the Italian alphabet given below. The written form of each letter's name in Italian and the phonetic pronunciation are listed in separate columns.

Letter	Italian Name	Phonetic Pronunciation	Letter	Italian Name	Phonetic Pronunciation
a	a	ah	q	cu	koo
b	bi	bee	r	èrre	ehr-reh
c	ci	chee	s	èsse	es-seh
d	di	dee	t	ti	tee
e	é	eh	u	u	oo
f	èffe	ehf-feh	v	vu/vi	voo/vee
g	gi	jee	(w)	doppia vu	doh-pee-ah voo
h	àcca	ah-kah	(x)	ics	eeks
i	i	ee	(y)	ipsilon	eep-see- lohn
(j)	i lunga	ee loon- gah		i greca	ee greh-ka
(k)	càppa	kahp-pah	z	zèta	zeh-tah
l	èlle	ehl-eh			
m	èmme	ehm-eh			
n	ènne	ehn-eh			
o	ò	oh			
p	pi	pee			

The Italian Sound Combinations

Here is the Italian alphabet again, with an example word in Italian to represent how each written letter should sound, as well as an example of an English word that has an equivalent sound. If the sounds are identical in Italian and English, no explanation is given. Multiple examples will be given for a letter if the pronunciation can vary. Italian is one of the most phonetic (and beautiful) languages spoken, and a little time spent learning how to pronounce the letter combinations will make learning the language much easier!

Letters(s)	Italian Pronunciation	English Pronunciation Equivalent	
a	cane	father	(ah sound)
b	bene	bell	
ca/co/cu	casa	cat	(hard c sound)
ci	ciao	cheese	(soft ch with long ee sound)
ce	cena	cheddar	(soft ch with short e sound)
chi	chi	key	(hard c with long ee sound)
che	che	kennel	(hard c with short e sound)
d	dado	dad	
e	era	bet	(eh sound)
e	vedi	bait	(ay sound)
f	farfalla	fan	
ga/go/gu	gusto	good	(hard g sound)
gi	giro	jeer	(soft j with long ee sound)

The Italian Sound Combinations (cont'd)

Letters(s)	Italian Pronunciation	English Pronunciation Equivalent	
ge	gettare	jet	(soft j with short e sound)
gli	figlio	million	("gli" is a unique Italian sound similar to the "lli" in million, pronounced like mil-lyee-on)*
gn	signora	onion	(sounds like the "ni" in onion)
h	--	--	(h is not pronounced in Italian)
i	vita	meet	(long ee sound)
l	luna	love	
m	mamma	mother	
n	non	no	
o	sole	soap	(oh sound)
o	modo	law	(aw sound)

*To form the sound that corresponds to the letter combination "gli" in Italian, place the tip of your tongue behind your upper teeth. Then, raise the back part of your tongue to the palate and roll your tongue forward to form the guttural "gl" sound that is a part of this combination. Finish with the "yee" sound. By listening, you will note the word **gli (the)** stresses the guttural sound, but when placed in the middle of the word, such as with **figlio (son)**, the "yee" part of the sound is stressed.

The Italian Sound Combinations (cont'd)

Letters(s)	Italian Pronunciation	English Pronunciation Equivalent	
p	pasta	pasta	
qu	quanto	quest	(qu together makes the kw sound)
r	Roma	---	(r is always trilled in Italian)
s	rossa	toss	(hard s)
s	rosa	nose	(soft s)
sch	schivo	skeet	(s + chi makes hard skey sound)
sche	schema	skill	(s + che makes hard skeh sound)
sci	sciare	shield	(soft sh sound with long ee sound)
sce	scemo	shed	(soft sh sound with short e sound)
t	tu	to	
u	uva	boot	(oo sound)
v	vincere	vine	
z	zero	zero	(soft z)
z	pizza	pizza	(hard z, like tz sound)

General Pronunciation and Stress for Italian Words

The Italian language is a phonetic language, and so each letter in an Italian word needs to be pronounced to create the final sound. If two vowels are written next to each other, both are pronounced, but the sound is a combined sound (referred to as a diphthong). There are many pronunciation rules, but the easiest thing to remember is just to pronounce what you see!

Most Italian words will be stressed on the second to last syllable, which is easy to remember if the word contains only three syllables—just stress the syllable in the middle of the word. In general, a syllable in Italian is usually made up of a vowel or consonant group with its vowel. The word **ragazzo**, for instance, which means **boy**, will place the stress on the /ga/ sound.

ragazzo: ra/GAZ/zo

There are many exceptions to this rule, however, and the first syllable is stressed instead in many cases for words with three syllables, while the second syllable is often stressed in words with four syllables, as below:

sabato: SA/ba/to

domenica: do/ME/ni/ca

A vowel alone can also form a complete syllable. **Abito** (**I live**), is a verb with three syllables where the first syllable, which happens to be the vowel /a/, is stressed.

abito: A/bi/to

In the few cases where the very last syllable is stressed, the vowel at the end of the word will be given a grave (`) accent.

Meeting and Greeting

As in English, in Italian there are many ways to greet people, and different expressions will be used depending on the situation and how well the individuals know one another. Italian society has become overall less formal. Many easy-going, familiar, and slang expressions are now commonly used, not only between friends and family, but even between acquaintances, although polite forms of address are still important to know.

Listed below are some of the most common ways to say, "hello." "**Buon giorno,**" can be used to mean, "**Good morning,**" when greeting both family members at home and shop owners at the piazza; this phrase can also be used in more formal situations with its literal translation of, "**Good day.**"

There are at least as many ways to say "good bye" as there are to say "hello," as noted below. Notice that the word **ciao** is unique, since it can be used as both an informal "**hi**" as well as a quick way to say "**good bye.**" **Ciao** is used frequently throughout Italy today with family and friends.

Buon giorno.*	Good morning. (lit. Good day.) used all day into evening
Buona sera.*	Good evening. early nighttime greeting
Buona notte.*	Good night. used when leaving/bedtime
Buona giornata.	(Have a) good day. to wish someone a nice (entire) day
Ciao.	Hi./Bye. informal greeting family/friends

Meeting and Greeting (cont'd)

Ci vediamo! (Until) we see each other (again)!
 for family or for a friend you
 hope to see again soon

Arrivederci. Good bye.
 familiar polite

Arriverla. Good bye.
 polite, with respect

ArrivederLa. Good bye.
 formal written form

Come va? How (is it) go(ing)?
 a slang greeting used often

Ciao bella! Hey, beautiful girl!
Ciao bello! Hey handsome!
 for someone you know (well)

A dopo! (See you) later!
 good bye between friends

A più tardi! (See you) later!
 good bye between friends

A presto! (See you) soon!
 good bye between friends

Use these phrases to agree with what someone is saying:

Si. Yes.
Certo. Of course.
D'accordo. (I) agree.
Penso di sì. (I) think so.

*Can be written as one word, as in **buongiorno**, **buonasera**, or **buonanotte**.

How to Be Polite in Italian

Piacere, Pregare, Scusarsi and Dispiacere

One of the most rewarding aspects of travel is becoming acquainted with the people in the region or country visited. Understanding the polite phrases of speech will take one a long way in this regard, as politeness and respect are usually rewarded with the same in return.

There are several very important and helpful verbs of politeness in Italian. The most useful of these verbs is **piacere**, with the meaning of **to like/to be pleasing to**, from which one of the phrases for "please" is derived.

The Italian word **favore** translates into the English as **favor**. The two different ways to say **please** in Italian, **per piacere** and **per favore**, are interchangeable, and loosely translate into "for a pleasantry/nicety" or "for a favor."

Grazie is a noun that means **thanks**, and used in the same way as the English **thank you**. If you are really pleased, say, "**Molte grazie!**" "**Tante grazie!**" or "**Mille grazie!**"

Per favore./Per piacere.	Please.
Grazie.	Thank you.
Molte grazie!	Thank you very much!
Tante grazie!	Thank you so much!
Mille grazie!	Thanks a lot! (lit. A thousand thanks!)

How to Be Polite in Italian (cont'd)

Piacere, Pregare, Scusarsi and Dispiacere

"Prego!" is the direct response to "Grazie," and means, "You're welcome!" It is derived from another verb of politeness, **pregare**, which has several meanings. **Pregare** can be translated as **to pray**, which lends itself to the connotation of asking or requesting something.

English phrases like, "I pray of you," "I beg of you," or "Pray tell," carry the same idea, although these are no longer commonly used. In a similar way, a simple, "**Prego...**" can also be used with a gesture to address someone when on line in a crowded place, as in, "**Go ahead of me, I beg you.**"

"**Sono pregati di,**" is a polite expression derived from **pregare** that may also be heard when someone in charge, such as a flight attendant or a tour guide, is directing a group of people.

Finally, if a waiter comes to the table with a wonderful dish for you to try, he may put this in front of you with a flourish and say, "**Prego!**" as in, "**Here you go!**"

Prego!	You're welcome!
Prego...	If (you) please...
.....	Prego can be used if you would like a stranger to go ahead of you in a line, usually with a gesture.
Prego!	Here you go!
Sono pregati di...	Are requested/asked/begged to...
.....	polite, to a group
Di niente.	It was nothing./You're welcome.

How to Be Polite in Italian (cont'd)

Piacere, Pregare, Scusarsi and Dispiacere

Scusarsi means to **excuse oneself**, and is used frequently in crowded situations in its polite command form, "**Mi scusi.**" "**Scusa**" is the form used between people who know one another.

Dispiacere is a verb that is used to convey the ideas of **sadness, sorrow, and regret** and so, "**Mi dispiace,**" means, "**I'm sorry.**"

Another expression that is useful when navigating an unfamiliar place, and especially when entering an unfamiliar building is, "**Permesso?**" This expression comes from the shortened form of the phrase, "**Permesso di entrata?**" The literal meaning is, "**Permission to enter?**" and might be thought of as useful in similar situations when in English we would ask, "**May I come in?**"

Here are some essential phrases to get through the throngs of tourists in Italy:

Mi scusi.	Excuse me. (polite command)
Scusa.	Excuse me. (familiar command)
Mi dispiace.	I'm sorry.
Permesso?	Permission to enter? May I come in?

When addressing someone formally, Italians use the following titles:

Signore	Mister/Sir
Signora	Misses/Madam/Ma'am
Signorina	Miss

Basic Communication

For our dialogues, Caterina speaks simple, basic Italian, and understands the more complex Italian spoken to her. Here are some simple phrases that may help in real life situations, when it may be difficult to understand exactly what is meant during an Italian conversation. Also, notice that Italians do not insert the word "do" at the beginning of their questions, as is proper in English.

Most Italians have some knowledge of English, and will try to oblige by speaking in both Italian and English if needed, choosing the words they know best from each language. So, don't be afraid to use a few Italian phrases yourself. Somehow, it all works out in the end!

If you are asked,

Parla italiano? (Do) you speak Italian?

You may reply,

Si, un po'. Yes, a little.

Si, molto bene. Yes, very well.

No, mi dispiace! No, I am sorry!

Parla inglese? (Do) you speak English?

An Italian may say,

No, parlo soltanto italiano. No, (I) only speak Italian.

Dov'è un interprete? Where is an interpreter?

Idiomatic Expressions

Dove and Ecco

As in English, many Italian expressions do not make sense if each word is translated literally, but together the words do have a significant meaning. These types of phrases can be called "idiomatic expressions."

Note that many of the meeting/greeting phrases are idiomatic expressions in Italian, and just need to be memorized. Here are a few more.

For instance, the interrogative expressions for **where is/where are** are **dov'è** and **dove sono**. The typical answer of **here/there is/are** is **ecco**. **Ecco** is a single word in Italian that encompasses both the adverbs **here/there** and the verbs **is/are**. Note that **ecco** is typically used to point out something that is in plain sight.

Dove?	Where?
Dov'è...?	Where is...?
Dove sono ...?	Where are...?
Ecco...	Here is.../Here are... There is.../There are...
Eccolo!/Eccola!	Here he is!/Here she is!/Here it is!
Eccomi!	Here I am!

Grammar Note

Describing Where You Are From

One of the questions most frequently asked of travelers during polite conversation is, "Where are you from?" There are two phrases that can be used to ask this question in Italian. There are subtle differences in the meaning of these two questions, as well as in the reply for each.

The first phrase uses the combination:

di + dove + essere

from + where + to be

This phrase is used to inquire about an individual's place of birth. In Italian, when the verb **to be (essere)** is used, the idea of **from** is expressed with **di**, as in, "From where are you?" In proper English, of course, we would say, "Where are you from?"

The answer in Italian will also use **di**, and be followed by the city or town of one's birth. Notice that the subject pronoun **io (I)** is usually left out of the answer, as it is understood from the ending of the verb.

Di dov'è Lei? **Where are you (pol.) from?**

Di dove sei? **Where are you (fam.) from?**

Sono di Chicago. **(I) am from Chicago.**

The second phrase uses the combination:

Da + dove + venire

from + where + to come

Grammar Note

Describing Where You Are From (cont'd)

The phrases below use the action verb **venire**, and are usually used in conversation when someone is visiting or has moved to a new place. The reply will use the **io** form of **venire**, which is **vengo**, and **da** for **from**, followed by a city, town, region/state, or country. Also, remember that when speaking of a region, state, or country, by convention, the definite article (**the**) (**il, la, l', gli**) must be used. The preposition **da** is then combined with the definite article to make **dal, dall', dalla, or dagli**, which means, "from the." For now, don't worry about these rules. Just look up and remember the correct way to say where you come from in case you are asked!

Da dove viene?/Da dove vieni?

Where do you come from? (pol.)/(fam.)

Vengo dall'America.

(I) come from America./I am from America.

Vengo dagli Stati Uniti.

(I) come from the United States.

Vengo dall'Illinois.

(I) come from Illinois.

Vengo dalla California.

(I) come from California.

Vengo dal New Jersey.

(I) come from New Jersey.

Vengo da Chicago.

(I) come from Chicago.

Idiomatic Expressions

"Quanti anni hai?"

Perhaps the most commonly asked question of someone is how old they are. In English, we say, "How old are you?" using the verb **to be**, as a statement of fact. But, Italians look at this question as the number of years accumulated during a lifetime (and maybe the wisdom accumulated during these years?) so they use the verb **to have**, **avere**. The question in Italian is, "**Quanti anni hai?**" or literally, "**How many years do you have?**" This is not really an idiomatic expression, but just another way of looking at things.

Quanti anni hai? How old are you?
(lit. How many years do you have?)

After this question is asked of you, the response will also use the verb **avere**, and you will respond,

Io ho (_____) anni. I have (_____) years.

It is not necessarily considered bad manners for a woman to lie about her age (depending on the situation)! But, whatever age a woman (or anyone else, for that matter) chooses to give, there are a couple of rules that are used to make conversation flow more easily in Italian:

1. The tens (20, 30, 40, etc.) drop their last vowel before the word **anni**. In this case, the expression would be:

Io ho vent'anni. I have 20 years.

Io ho trent'anni. I have 30 years.

Io ho quarant'anni. I have 40 years.

Idiomatic Expressions

"Quanti anni hai?" (cont'd)

2. All numbers that end in **uno**, (21, 31, etc), drop the final **-o** before a noun that starts with a vowel.

So, if one is 21, 31, or 41 years old, the reply would be as follows:

Io ho ventun'anni. I have 21 years.

Io ho trentun'anni. I have 31 years.

Io ho quarantun'anni. I have 41 years.

No need to remember all these rules—just look up and remember your age and the ages of your immediate family members for now to commit to memory!

One more thing, after all these rules—suppose the speakers are discussing the age of someone else? In this case, the question and answer (using the third person singular) would be:

Quanti anni ha (____)? How old is (____)?
(lit. How many years does
(____) have?)

Il bambino ha (____) anni. The baby has (____) years.

To complete our discussion of age, here is a general list of terms that describe us all, as we grow from a baby to an adult:

il bambino/il bimbo	the baby (male)
la bambina/la bimba	the baby (female)
il ragazzino	the little boy
la ragazzina	the little girl
il ragazzo	the boy/the young man
la ragazza	the girl/the young woman
l'uomo	the man
la donna	the woman
il signore	the gentleman
la signorina	the young lady (unmarried)
la signora	the lady (married)

Opera fans may recall two operas with somewhat antiquated words used to describe a girl in the title: *La Fanciulla del West* (*The Pretty Young Girl of the West*) by Giacomo Puccini and *La Giocanda* (*The Merry Girl*) by Amilcare Ponchielli. *La Giocanda* also the Italian name for the Mona Lisa.

Grammar Note

Italian Street Addresses

In Italy, the format for street addresses is different from the format in United States. The word **via** for **street** precedes the Italian street name, and is not capitalized when written. The number of the building is given after the street name and is followed by the apartment number.

The Italian abbreviation **int.** stands for **interno**, and is used instead of a number sign before the apartment number. Writing the apartment number for the address is not always necessary in Italy though, as in many towns families have lived in the same home for generations!

The second line of the address gives the **Italian zip code** for the city (**Codice Avviamento Postale**, or **CAP**) and then the name of the city. The **CAP** should always be included. The region (usually abbreviated) may be written in parentheses after the city as well.

Here is Caterina's (fictional) address in proper English, and then in Italian, side by side for comparison.

6 North Michigan Street, #22

via North Michigan, 6 int. 22

Chicago, IL 61615

61615 Chicago (IL)

Grammar Note

Saying the Date in Italian

Here is the way to say the date in Italian:

definite article + number + **di** + month

This is actually a lot easier than it may look! Below are a few examples. You will notice that in English we say, "January second," for "January 2," while in Italian, the phrasing and word order reads, "the two of January."

The exception to this rule is the first day of the month. In this case, the word **primo**, which means **first**, must always be used, instead of **uno**.

Oggi è il due di gennaio.

Today is January 2.

Domani è il tre di gennaio.

Tomorrow is January 3.

Dopodomani è il quattro di gennaio.

The day after tomorrow is January 4.

Oggi è il primo di agosto.

Today is August 1.

To say, "On Mondays..." referring to something that happens every Monday, just use the definite article **il (the)** at the beginning of the sentence for all the masculine weekdays ending in **ì** and **la** for the feminine **Sunday (domenica)**.

Il lunedì io vado al lavoro.

On Mondays, I go to work.

La domenica io vado in chiesa.

On Sundays, I go to church.

Money

The word **euro** is invariable in Italian—the ending is the same whether we are speaking of one or one million **euros**! Also, although in English we pronounce the word “euro” with two syllables—something like “your/ro,” in Italian, the word is pronounced with three syllables, with the **-u**, as you may recall, pronounced as an “oo” sound. Phonetically, the Italian word is pronounced something like this: “eh/oo/ro,” with each syllable running directly into the next.

Here are some important phrases to use when changing money:

Dov'è una banca? Where is a bank?

Cerco una banca. I am looking (for) a bank.

Ho bisogno di cambiare i soldi.

I need to change money.

Vorrei cambiare i soldi.

I would like to change money.

Ho bisogno di cambiare i dollari con l'eruo.

I need to change (the money in) dollars for
(the money in) euros.

Vorrei cambiare i dollari con l'euro.

I would like to change dollars for euros.

Qual'è il tasso di cambio?

What is the exchange rate?

Qual'è la tariffa?

What is the fee (for exchanging)?

Qual'è la percentuale? What is the percent?

It may also be helpful to know some phrases to use in order to barter with the local merchants in the piazza.

We begin by asking:

Quanto costa...	How much is... (lit. How much costs...)
-----------------	--

Of course, the listed price will be:

troppo caro	too expensive
costoso	expensive, costly
proprio costoso	really expensive

Costa un occhio della testa!	Costs an arm and a leg! (lit. Costs an eye out of the head!)
------------------------------	---

Unless the article happens to be:

in vendita/in saldo,saldi	on sale/on sale for a reduced price
in svendita	in a closeout sale
sconto/scontato	discount/discounted
a prezzo basso	at low/lowered price

Money (cont'd)

Once we have decided on that perfect souvenir, here are the different methods to use to pay for it!

If you want to ask if a certain method of payment is accepted, you could say:

Posso/Può pagare con...	Can I/Can you pay with...
...la carta di credito?	...a credit card?
...il bancomat?	...a debit card?
...in contanti?	...in cash?
...un assegno?	...a check?

And the answer will usually be:

Accettiamo la carta di credito.	We accept credit card(s).
Accettiamo il bancomat.	We accept debit card(s).
Non accettiamo assegni.*	We do not accept checks.*
Documento, per favore...	Identification, please...

*Italian checks are not usually accepted for small purchases, and foreign checks are not likely to be accepted at all!

To ask for the check in a restaurant, simply say:

Il conto, per favore. The check, please.

When dining, a service charge may be included and should be listed on the restaurant bill—always look at the bill or ask your waiter if you are not sure. It is usually called the **coperto (cover)** or the **pane e coperto (bread and cover)**, as there is always a charge of at least 1.5 or 2.0 euros for the bread served before a meal in Italy.

In tourist areas, a **service charge (servizio)** of 10-20% may be added onto the bill. Italians will generally not eat in a restaurant with this additional service charge, although tourists usually don't seem to notice or mind this charge.

Both the **coperto** and the **servizio** should also be listed in the menu, though, as required by law in Italy.

A little more is sometimes left for the waiter as a tip as well, but this does not have to be a certain percentage of the bill, and is usually determined by "rounding up" the payment by a few euros to make it easier to pay in cash.

È incluso il servizio? Is the service charge included?

Tenga il resto. Keep the change.

If you only have large bills or if you want a receipt, you might ask:

Mi può portare il resto, per favore?

Could you bring me the change, please? (pol.)

Mi può dare la ricevuta, per favore?

Could you give me a receipt, please? (pol.)

Vocabulary At the Train Station

This vocabulary list may be helpful in navigating the typical Italian train station and train routes. You may want to try the automatic ticket machines if there is a long line at the ticket counter.

il binario	train track/train rail
la fermata	the stop (along a train or bus route)
la prima fermata	the first stop
la prossima fermata	the next stop
l'ultima fermata	the last stop
locale/regionale	local train which makes all stops of the route
diretto	direct/non-stop train to the stated destination
espresso	express/non-stop train to the stated destination
intercity	train which goes from one major city to another
la macchina obliteratrice	ticket canceling and date validating stamping machine
cambio treno	change train(s)
la coincidenza	the connection
il sottopassaggio/sottopasso	underpass used to get to train tracks at a station

l'andata	the journey there the act of leaving on a trip
il ritorno	the return trip the act of coming back
il biglietto di sola andata	the one way ticket
l'andata e ritorno	round trip (leave and return)
il biglietto di andata e ritorno	the round trip ticket
il supplemento	additional charge
l'ora	the hour
l'orario	the schedule
l'arrivo	the arrival
la partenza	the departure
la valigia	suitcase
il bagaglio	baggage
il deposito bagagli	luggage check room
il bagagliaio	luggage compartment
la carrozza	train car
lo scompartimento	compartment in a train
il posto/i posti	seat/seats
occupato(a)/riservato(a)	occupied (seat)/reserved (seat)
libero(a)	free, open (seat)

Buying a Ticket and Taking the Train

Here is a summary of important phrases travelers need to know to get around town on public transportation. Notice that Italians say they need or want a ticket **for**, with the word **per**, rather than the more usual English **to**. Also, although one could use the word **voglio**, for “I want,” it is considered more polite to instead use **vorrei**, which means, “I would like.”

Vorrei un biglietto per Milano.

(I) would like a ticket for Milan.

Vorrei un biglietto di andata e ritorno.

(I) would like a round trip ticket.

(lit. a ticket of going and returning)

Voglio prendere il treno diretto.

(I) want to take the direct train (non-stop train).

Devo pagare il supplemento?

Must (I) pay an extra fee (for fast trains)?

Vorrei il locale.

(I) would like the local (many stops on the route).

Cambio/Cambi treno a...

(I)/(You) change train(s) at...

Non vorrei cambiare treno.

(I) don't want to change train(s).

Devo cambiare treno?

Must (I) change trains?

Quanto ci vuole per la coincidenza?

How much time is needed for the connection?

Dov'è l'orario?

Where is the (train) schedule?

A che ora parte il treno?

At what time (does) the train leave?

A che ora arriva il treno?

At what time (does) the train arrive?

Prendo il treno per Milano alle dieci.

(I) take the train for Milan at 10 AM.

È questo il treno per Milano?

Is this the train for Milan?

È questa la fermata per Milano?

Is this the stop for Milan?

È la prossima fermata per Milano?

Is the next stop for Milan?

Stare per partire. (It's) about to leave.

Sta partendo. (It's) leaving (right now).

Sta arrivando. (It's) arriving (right now).

Il treno sta arrivando/sta partendo.

The train is arriving/departing (right now).

Hai perso treno! (You) (fam.) have missed the train!

Ho perso treno! (I) have missed the train!

Ho preso il treno sbagliato!

(I) have taken the wrong train!

Asking for Assistance

While visiting an unfamiliar city, it may be necessary to ask a stranger for help. An easy way to politely phrase any question you have is to use the phrase, “**mi può,**” which means “**could you (polite)... me.**” Then, simply add the infinitive verb for what you need at the end of the Italian phrase—there is no need to conjugate using this method! If we add **dire** to the phrase, for instance, we get, “**Mi può dire...**” for “**Could (you polite) tell me...**”

The polite form of the verb **sapere** (to know a fact), **sa**, can also be used in many situations to ask if someone knows the information you need with the phrase, “**Lei sa...**”

Mi scusi... Excuse me (pol. command)...

Mi può ...? Could (you pol.)... me?

Lei sa...? (Do) you (pol.) know...?

You can put together many sentences asking the location of a place as follows:

Mi, scusi, mi può dire dov'è...

Excuse me, could (you pol.) tell me where is...

Mi scusi, Lei sa dov'è...

Excuse me, (do) you (pol.) know where is...

...l'albergo? ...the hotel?

...il ristorante? ...the restaurant?

...la banca? ...the bank?

...la metro/metropolitana? ...the subway?

...la fermata dell'autobus? ...the bus stop?

...la stazione dei treni? ...the train station?

Use a similar format to ask questions about schedules:

Mi scusi, mi può dire quando...

Excuse me, could you (pol.) tell me when...

Mi scusi, Lei sa quando...

Excuse me, (do) you (pol.) know when...

...arriva il treno? ...the train arrives?
(lit. arrives the train)

...arriva l'autobus? ...the bus arrives?

...parte il treno? ...the train leaves?
(lit. leaves the train)

...parte l'autobus? ...the bus leaves?

...apre il museo? ...the museum opens?
(lit. opens the museum)

...chiude il museo? ...the museum closes?

If the answer to these questions involves a particular street, the answer you will hear will use the phrase **in... via**, for the English **on... street**.

La banca è in via Verde. The bank is on Green Street.

Helpful expressions for those driving:

Può controllare l'olio/le gomme/l'acqua?

Could you check the oil/the tires/the water?

Può cambiare la gomma? Could you change the tire?

Può fare il pieno? Could you fill it up?

Il pieno, per favore! Fill it up, please!

Vocabulary

Driving in the City and on the Highway

il paese	town, village
la città	city
il centro	downtown
la piazza	the town square
il palazzo	large building (inhabited)
l'edificio	large building (exterior)
la strada/la via	road/street/way
la calle	Venetian for narrow street
il vicolo	narrow street/alley
l'automobilista	driver
il traffico	traffic
il semaforo	traffic light
il cartello (stradale)	(road) sign
il senso unico	one-way street
il senso vietato	forbidden street
l'angolo	corner
l'incrocio	intersection
il marciapiede	sidewalk
l'area pedonale	pedestrian zone
l'autostrada	superhighway
la tangenziale	peripheral road/bypass

l'entrata	(highway) entrance
l'uscita	(highway) exit
la deviazione	detour
il limite di velocità	speed limit
vietato	forbidden
la corsia	lane
il sorpasso	overtake/pass
la corsia di sorpasso	passing lane
la corsia di emergenza	emergency lane/shoulder
la corsia a scorrimento veloce	express lane
l'autogrill	rest stop with food
il parcheggio	parking lot/parking space
il disco orario	parking disc/timer
porta via	tow away
il carro attrezzi	tow truck
il carrabile	driveway
il passo carrabile	no parking driveway
il divieto di sosta	no parking/forbidden stopping
il divieto di accesso	no access/no trespassing/forbidden entry

Renting a Car—Take me?/Get in!

Quanto costa?	How much does it cost?
Quanto costa al giorno?	What does it cost for the day?
Quanto costa alla settimana?	What does it cost for a week?
Che modelli avete?	What models do you have?
Mi mostri, per favore.	Show me, please. (pol. command)
È tutto compreso?	Is everything included?
È compresa l'assicurazione?	Is the insurance included?
È compresa la benzina?	Is the gas included?
C'è l'imposta IVA?	Is there a value added tax?

If you would like a ride from a taxi or help from a friend to get somewhere, begin with **"mi può"** or **"vorrei."**

Mi può chiamare un tassì, per favore?

Could (you pol.) call me a taxi, please? (pol.)

Mi può portare...

Could (you pol.) take me? (as in drive me...)

Vorrei prendere il treno. I want to take the train.

C'è una stazione della metro vicino?

Is there a subway station/stop near-by?

Note that different prepositions are used for cars vs. other forms of transportation when *getting in*, and how the prepositions **su (on)** and **da (from/out of)** are combined with the different forms of **the (il, l', or la)**. The combined prepositions are given in red.

Salgo in macchina. I get into the car.

Salgo su... I get on/I board/I go aboard...

Salgo... sull'autobus, sul treno, sulla motocicletta, sulla bicicletta, sull'aereo.

I get onto... the bus, the train, the motorcycle, the bicycle, the airplane

Scendo da ... I go down/I get down/I get off or out of...

Scendo dalla macchina. I get out of the car.

Scendo... dall'autobus, dal treno, dalla motocicletta, dalla bicicletta, dall'aereo.

I get off of... the bus, the train, the motorcycle, the bicycle, the airplane.

Sali in macchina! Get into the car!
(fam. command)

Scendi dalla macchina! Get out of the car!
(fam. command)

Dammi le chiavi (della macchina)!
Give me the (car) keys! (fam. command).

Coming and Going

The verb **andare** is an irregular verb that means **to go**. The verb that means **to go out**, **uscire**, and the verb that means **to come**, **venire**, are both also irregular. Remember the phrase, "**Vengo dall' America**," which means, "**I come from America**"? We will now use the verb **venire**, along with **uscire**, for some of our important phrases.

Here are some simple phrases of coming and going that may be useful for the traveler. "**Vieni qua!**" for instance, which means, "**Come here!**" is a helpful phrase for the family trying to stay together.

Also helpful to remember is "**Vengo io**," a phrase used to emphasize one's intention to do something right away, as in, "**I am (the one who is) coming (to take care of it).**" Use this when other people are in the room and you are the one to go to answer the door.

The "you familiar" form is used for these phrases. Notice the insertion of the preposition **a**, for **to**, after the conjugated forms of **andare** and **venire**, which is useful to keep the flow of conversation smooth. The phrases that use **a (to)** have been underlined in the list below.

Vado a scuola. (I) go to school.

Vado a lavorare. (I) go to work.

Tu vai a lavorare oggi? (Do) you go to work today?

No, vado a fare la spesa.

No, (I) go to do the grocery shopping.

Esco presto stamattina. (I) go out early this morning
 Esci alle otto oggi? (Do) (you) go out at eight today?

Io vengo a casa. I come home.

Vengo io! I'm coming!

Vieni qua! (You) Come here!
 (fam. command)

Michele, vieni qua! Michael, come here!
 (fam. command)

Michele, vieni qua, subito!
 Michael, come here, right away!

Non voglio andare a scuola.
 (I) don't want to go to school.

Non voglio venire a casa presto.
 (I) don't want to come home early

Non voglio uscire stasera.
 (I) don't want to go out tonight.

Non voglio uscire per cena stasera.
 (I) don't want to go out for dinner tonight.

Non voglio uscire con Francesca.
 (I) don't want to go out with Francesca.