



Italian Language Kit

Expressions - Grammar - Online Resources - Culture



Introduction

Whether you plan to embark on a new journey towards learning Italian or you just need a basic reference booklet for a trip abroad, the Cactus team has compiled some of the most helpful Italian expressions, grammar rules, culture tips and recommendations. Unsurprisingly, Italian is an extremely popular choice among Cactus language learners, who learn it out of a passion and love of the Italian culture and gastronomy. Learning Italian is an excellent way and pretext to indulge in the renowned Italian gastronomy, and to discover the treasures Italy has to offer. Italy has one of the world's highest concentrations of UNESCO heritage sites, and is boasting gorgeous landscapes, making Italian a very attractive language to learn. Learning Italian is the beginning of an exciting adventure that is waiting for you!



The Cactus Team

3. **Essential Expressions**
4. **Grammar and Numbers**
5. **Useful Verbs**
8. **Online Resources**
10. **Take a Language Holiday**
11. **Cultural Differences**
12. **Italian Culture Recommendations**
15. **Start Learning Italian**

Contact us

Telephone (local rate)

0845 130 4775

Telephone (int'l)

+44 1273 830 960

Monday-Thursday: 9am-7pm

Friday: 9am-5pm



Essential Expressions

Hello	Buongiorno (<i>bwohn jour-noh</i>)
Goodbye	Arrivederci (<i>ah-ree-vah-dair-chee</i>)
Please	Per favore (<i>pair fa-vohr-ray</i>)
Thank you	Grazie (<i>grat-tzee-yay</i>)
Yes	Sì (<i>see</i>)
No	No (<i>no</i>)
Excuse me/sorry	Scusi (<i>skoo-zee</i>)
My name is...	Mi chiamo... (<i>mee kee-ah-mo</i>)
What is your name?	Come si chiama? (<i>koh-meh see kee-ah-mah</i>)
Nice to meet you	Piacere / Molto lieto (<i>pee-ah-cheh-reh / mohl-toh lee-eh-toh</i>)
Where do you come from?	Di dov'è? (<i>dee doh-veh</i>)
I come from Great Britain/America	Sono del Regno Unito / Sono Americano
How are you?	Come sta? / Come stai? (<i>koh-meh stah / koh-meh sty</i>)
Where is...?	Dov'è...? (<i>doh-veh</i>)
I would like...	Vorrei... (<i>voar-ray</i>)
How much is it?	Quanto costa? (<i>kwan-toh cost-ah</i>)
Can you help me?	Può aiutarmi? (<i>pwoh ah-yoo-tar-mee</i>)
I don't understand	Non capisco (<i>non kah-pees-koh</i>)
I don't speak Italian	Non parlo italiano (<i>non par-lo ee-tahl-ee-ah-no</i>)
Do you speak English?	Parli inglese? (<i>par-lee een-gleh-zeh</i>)



Grammar and Numbers

Indefinite articles

before	Masculine	Feminine
a consonant	un ragazzo	una ragazza
a vowel	un albergo	un' opera
gn	uno gnomo	
ps	uno psicologo	
s + consonant	uno scambio	
x	uno xilofono	
y	uno yogurt	
z	uno zero	

Numbers

0	zero	10	dieci	20	venti	200	duecento
1	uno	11	undici	21	ventuno	300	trecento
2	due	12	dodici	30	trenta	400	quattrocento
3	tre	13	tre dici	40	quaranta	500	cinquecento
4	quattro	14	quattordici	50	cinquanta	600	seicento
5	cinque	15	quindici	60	sessanta	700	settecento
6	sei	16	sedici	70	settanta	800	ottocento
7	sette	17	diciassette	80	ottanta	900	novecento
8	otto	18	diciotto	90	novanta	1000	mille
9	nove	19	diciannove	100	cento		

Definite articles

before	Singular	Plural
	Masculine	Masculine
a consonant	il ragazzo	i ragazzi
a vowel	l' albergo	gli alberghi
s + consonant	lo scambio	gli scambi
z	lo zero	gli zeri
ps	lo psicologo	gli psicologi
y	lo yogurt	gli yogurt
	Feminine	Feminine
a consonant	la ragazza	le ragazze
a vowel	l' opera	le opere



Useful Verbs

Avere (to have)

Present

ho
hai
ha
abbiamo
avete
hanno

Present perfect

ho **avuto**
hai **avuto**
ha **avuto**
abbiamo **avuto**
avete **avuto**
hanno **avuto**

Imperfect

avevo
avevi
aveva
avevamo
avevate
avevano

Pluperfect

avevo **avuto**
avevi **avuto**
aveva **avuto**
avevamo **avuto**
avevate **avuto**
avevano **avuto**

Future

avrò
avrà
avrà
avremo
avrete
avranno

Future perfect

avrò **avuto**
avrà **avuto**
avrà **avuto**
avremo **avuto**
avrete **avuto**
avranno **avuto**

Essere (to be)

Present

sono
sei
è
siamo
siete
sono

Present perfect

sono **stato/a**
sei **stato/a**
è **stato/a**
siamo **stati/e**
siete **stati/e**
sono **stati/e**

Imperfect

ero
eri
era
eravamo
eravate
erano

Pluperfect

ero **stato/a**
eri **stato/a**
era **stato/a**
eravamo **stati/e**
eravate **stati/e**
erano **stati/e**

Future

sarò
sarai
sarà
saremo
sarete
saranno

Future perfect

sarò **stato/a**
sarai **stato/a**
sarà **stato/a**
saremo **stati/e**
sarete **stati/e**
saranno **stati/e**



Useful Verbs

Andare (to go)

Present

vado
vai
va
andiamo
andate
vanno

Present perfect

sono **andato/a**
sei **andato/a**
è **andato/a**
siamo **andati/e**
siete **andati/e**
sono **andati/e**

Imperfect

andavo
andavi
andava
andavamo
andavate
andavano

Pluperfect

ero **andato/a**
eri **andato/a**
era **andato/a**
eravamo **andati/e**
eravate **andati/e**
erano **andati/e**

Future

andrò
andrai
andrà
andremo
andrete
andranno

Future perfect

sarò **andato/a**
sarai **andato/a**
sarà **andato/a**
saremo **andati/e**
sarete **andati/e**
saranno **andati/e**

Parlare (to talk)

Present

parlo
parli
parla
parliamo
parlate
parlano

Present perfect

ho **parlato**
hai **parlato**
ha **parlato**
abbiamo **parlato**
avete **parlato**
hanno **parlato**

Imperfect

parlavo
parlavi
parlava
parlavamo
parlavate
parlavano

Pluperfect

avevo **parlato**
avevi **parlato**
aveva **parlato**
avevamo **parlato**
avevate **parlato**
avevano **parlato**

Future

parlerò
parlerai
parlerà
parleremo
parlerete
parleranno

Future perfect

avrò **parlato**
avrà **parlato**
avrà **parlato**
avremo **parlato**
avrete **parlato**
avranno **parlato**



Useful Verbs

Credere (to believe)

Present

credo
credi
crede
crediamo
credete
credono

Present perfect

ho **creduto**
hai **creduto**
ha **creduto**
abbiamo **creduto**
avete **creduto**
hanno **creduto**

Imperfect

credevo
credevi
credeva
credevamo
credevate
credevano

Pluperfect

avevo **creduto**
avevi **creduto**
aveva **creduto**
avevamo **creduto**
avevate **creduto**
avevano **creduto**

Future

crederò
crederai
crederà
crederemo
crederete
crederanno

Future perfect

avrò **creduto**
avrà **creduto**
avrà **creduto**
avremo **creduto**
avrete **creduto**
avranno **creduto**

Dormire (to sleep)

Present

dormo
dormi
dorme
dormiamo
dormite
dormono

Present perfect

ho **dormito**
hai **dormito**
ha **dormito**
abbiamo **dormito**
avete **dormito**
hanno **dormito**

Imperfect

dormivo
dormivi
dormiva
dormivamo
dormivate
dormivano

Pluperfect

avevo **dormito**
avevi **dormito**
aveva **dormito**
avevamo **dormito**
avevate **dormito**
avevano **dormito**

Future

dormirò
dormirai
dormirà
dormiremo
dormirete
dormiranno

Future perfect

avrò **dormito**
avrà **dormito**
avrà **dormito**
avremo **dormito**
avrete **dormito**
avranno **dormito**



Online Resources

There are so many free online resources that it is sometimes difficult to know which ones to use, and to identify which ones are good. Cactus has carefully assessed the wide range of free language learning resources available online to provide you with a selection of our most recommended, useful and reliable sources of information for learning Italian. These can be used as a helpful support to language learning whilst taking one of our face-to-face Italian courses.

Dictionaries

WordReference is a popular bilingual dictionary, and combines its own dictionary with the long-established Collins dictionary. WordReference also includes a handy Italian verb conjugator and a forum where users can get help with Italian language related questions.

Reverso is a well-established online bilingual dictionary. It includes an English-Italian dictionary, along with other handy tools such as a translator and spellchecker.

Pronunciation

Forvo is a free and comprehensive pronunciation guide maintained by native speakers around the world. It includes the pronunciation of more than 3 million words in 325 languages.

Vocabulary

Memrise is a popular website and mobile app which enables you to memorise Italian vocabulary. It is a great and fun way to learn new vocabulary in addition to your language course.



Online Resources

Quizlet is a fun and simple website and mobile app which will help you develop your Italian vocabulary using flash cards.

Cram has a large list of flash cards to help you learn new Italian words. It also has a mobile app, so you can memorise Italian vocabulary anywhere anytime.

Language Guide is a project helping Italian language students to build their vocabulary using an image and sound dictionary.

Mobile app

Duolingo is a fun mobile app which offers a comprehensive series of vocabulary, pronunciation and translation exercises. It is a great way to practice what you learn during your Italian evening course while on the go. Duolingo also has a website version, should you prefer to use it from the comfort of your computer.



Take a Language Holiday

Taking an immersion course abroad is a very efficient way to quickly improve your Italian language skills. Not only it will increase your confidence in speaking Italian, but it will also be a unique opportunity to discover and experience the Italian culture and practice Italian with native speakers on a daily basis. Cactus has teamed up with the best language schools across the world to offer you a first-rate language learning experience.

Mainland Italy

The Italian culture, literature, arts and gastronomy have left a strong and long-lasting mark on the Western world. Italy is a country with numerous treasures, from ancient ruins to magnificent galleries and cathedrals, not mentioning its landscapes of outstanding beauty. Italy is also a diverse country with unique regions and cities. Our large choice of destinations means you will have the opportunity to make the most of what Italy has to offer. Cactus offers Italian immersion courses across Italy, including in the renowned cities of Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice and Verona, as well as in several other coastal locations.

Italian Islands

If you prefer to discover one of Italy's unique islands, Cactus offers Italian language holidays on the lovely Island of Elba and in fascinating Sicily.



Cultural Differences

Every culture has its specificities, and as fascinating as they can be, not knowing them can prove surprising and challenging when travelling. To help you blend into the local culture and make the most of your time in Italy, we have listed some of the most striking cultural differences you should be aware of, along with some helpful tips.

Eating times

Like in most mediterranean countries, Italians have a more relaxed way of life than in the UK. Italians generally have lunch between noon and 2pm, depending on the region, and have dinner between 8pm and 10pm. This is reflected in the working times, and most businesses, museums and churches are closed between noon and 2pm, sometimes longer. This may be inconvenient if you are not used to it, but it actually contributes to the Italian way of life. While one could say that 'time is money' in Northern Europe or America, in Italy 'time is life'.

Coffee

Coffee is an institution in Italy and there are a couple of rules you should be aware of. Any form of milky coffee, such as 'cappuccino', 'caffé latte', or 'latte macchiato', should only be ordered in the morning. And beware of ordering just a 'latte': you will get a simple glass of cold milk. Similarly, don't ask for an espresso, but simply for a 'caffé'. Frappuccino isn't a thing in Italy, and Italians prefer to keep everything simple. There are some regional exceptions though. For example, you may order a 'caffé alla nocciola' in Naples, that is, a coffee with hazelnut cream.

Clothing

While wearing shorts and sandals is fine for the beach, you should prefer smart-casual clothes for cities. Also, avoid any offence when visiting churches by covering your shoulders and torso.



Italian Culture Recommendations

Books

The Italian literature is ancient and renowned, and there is a variety of genres you can choose from to practice Italian. It is almost impossible to make an exhaustive list of books to read when it comes to Italian literature, but we would certainly recommend these for those who are learning the language:

- ***Le avventure di Pinocchio***, by Carlo Collodi: of the most famous novels for children, Pinocchio has been translated in over 240 languages since its original publication in 1883. Reading it in Italian will be an opportunity to rediscover the captivating adventures of Pinocchio and his creator Geppetto.
- ***Novecento***, by Alessandro Baricco: described by its author as half a play and half a tale, this book tells the story of a great pianist growing up on a boat and never touching land.
- ***I pirati della Malesia***, by Emilio Salgari: this exotic adventure novel was published in 1896 and hasn't lost its appeal since then. Part of the Sandokan Series, this novel follows the adventures of pirates fighting injustices.
- ***La solitudine dei numeri primi***, by Paolo Giordano: this novel narrates the complex lives and relationship between two traumatised outsiders.

Music and Films

The Italian cinema is one of the most varied and eminent in the world. There are many Italian films you should watch, but as a new learner we would recommend easy-to-understand films such as:

- ***Ladri di biciclette*** (1948): an Italian classic, this film follows a poor man looking for his stolen bicycle across the streets of Rome.



Italian Culture Recommendations

- **La vita è bella** (1997): this comedy-drama film is partly based on real history and follows a Jewish Italian father who has to be creative to protect his son from the Nazis.
- **Il capitale umano** (2013): based on the American novel 'Human Capital', this film tells the story of two families' lives connected by an accident.

Music-wise, there are many songs with Italian lyrics you could listen to in order to practice your listening skills. Depending on your preferences, you may be more interested in Italian rap or instead in rock. Listening to easy-to-understand songs will prove more efficient for beginners and elementary Italian learners. Here are a few we picked up for you:

- **Volare**, by Domenico Modugno: a classic and well-known 1950s Italian song.
- **L'Italiano**, by Toto Cutugno: an easy-to-understand song with simple lyrics which will help you catch new words.
- **Acqua Azzurra Acqua Chiara**, by Lucio Battisti: another classic and catchy Italian song.
- **Il Pescatore**, by Fabrizio De André: this song has a low tempo, making it easy to follow and understand.

Food

Italian cuisine is renowned across the world and has strongly influenced other cuisines worldwide. As a result, it can be hard to decide which dish to choose from, but we thought you should taste these:

- **Pappa al Pomodoro (Bread and Tomato Soup)**: a very rich tomato soup made with olive oil and bread.



Italian Culture Recommendations

- **Insalata Caprese (Caprese salad):** resembling the colors of the Italian flag, this salad is made of sliced mozzarella, tomatoes and green basil. It is traditionally served as an 'antipasti', that is, a starter.
- **Coniglio al Vino Rosso (Rabbit Braised in Red Wine):** cooked with red wine, this tasty braise is making a comeback in Italy.
- **Pasta zucchini e gamberetti (Zucchini Pasta and Shrimps):** this delicious Italian pasta recipe is a classic.
- **Spaghetti all'Amatriciana:** another great Italian pasta recipe prepared with Amatriciana sauce, which is based on tomato, pork meat and pecorino cheese.
- **Pesce Spada alla Ghiotta (Swordfish with Olives and Capers):** a swordfish steak served with olives and capers.
- **Risotto ai funghi (Mushroom Risotto):** along with pasta, rice is a staple of Italian cuisine. This creamy mushroom risotto is an excellent choice for a successful meal.
- **Torta Salata di Zucchini e Cipolle (Zucchini, Onion and Ricotta Pie):** a savoury pie made of fresh ricotta and eggs, and often including zucchini, onions, squash or peppers.
- **Calzone:** we could not have completed this list without mentioning this highly popular folded pizza. Originating from Naples, it is typically stuffed with ham, mozzarella, ricotta and eggs.
- **Pignoli (Pine Nut Cookies):** these are classic nutty Italian cookies.
- **Panna Cotta:** this well-known sweet cream and gelatin pudding is easy to prepare, and even easier to enjoy!
- **Torta di Sant'Antonio (Apple and Red Wine Tart):** originating from the Alps, this delicious pie is cooked with red wine and cinnamon.



Start Learning Italian

With so many language learning options available ranging from evening classes to online courses, it is often difficult to know where to start your Italian language learning journey. It's important to assess which type of language course or combination of courses is the most appropriate for you. To help you make the right choice, the experts at Cactus have compared the benefits of each alternative and provided a comprehensive list of language learning options to get you started.

Language Holidays: Immersion courses are an excellent way to learn and practice Italian on a daily basis while discovering the local culture. For more information about our language holidays destinations, please see page 10.

Group Evening Courses: Evening classes in the UK are ideal if you want to learn Italian after work or your studies. They will help you learn Italian quickly in a sociable environment and they offer excellent preparation for a language holiday abroad, as they will enable you to understand the basics of Italian prior to your trip.

Private Tuition: If you can't fit a group language course in your schedule or you prefer to study in your own time, one-to-one Italian classes are the perfect solution. Cactus offers both face-to-face and Skype Italian language lessons.

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language): Living abroad is a dream that many long for, and it is often said to be the best way to achieve fluency in a foreign language. For fluent English speakers, one of the easiest ways to live abroad is by teaching English as a Foreign Language. You can become an English teacher abroad by taking a TEFL course with Cactus. We offer CELTA and Trinity Cert TESOL preparation courses across the world, including in Italy. For more information about TEFL courses and advice on how to become a TEFL teacher, please visit our dedicated [website](#), or email us at info@cactustefl.com.

Visit our websites

Language Holidays

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Contact us

Telephone (local rate)

0845 130 4775

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+44 1273 830 960

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Our Address

103 Lorna Road
Hove
East Sussex
BN3 3EL
United Kingdom