FREE PHRASEBOOK · WITH AUDIO

Italian for your *trip*

The phrases you'll actually use

- 7 real-life situations
- 60+ phrases, with my voice
- Little cultural secrets along the way



Buongiorno!

Offro io!

Permesso?

Riccardo Fausti Your online Italian teacher

riccardofausti.com

@italy.explained

How to use this phrasebook

Seven situations, seven short lessons. Choose one, listen to every phrase, say it out loud, then read the dialogues as if you were there. Tomorrow, try another one.

And when you're in Italy, keep it on your phone: it's ready when you need it.

Tap ▶ **Listen** to hear me say each phrase.

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The 10 phrases you need most

If you only learn ten, learn these.

1 **Buongiorno! / Buonasera!**
bwon-JOR-no · bwo-na-SE-ra
Hello (polite)
LISTEN → p. 4

2 **Permesso?**
per-MES-so
May I come in?
LISTEN → p. 4

3 **Al banco o al tavolo?**
al BAN-ko · al TA-vo-lo
At the counter or at a table?
LISTEN → p. 7

4 **Offro io!**
OF-fro I-o
It's on me!
LISTEN → p. 8

5 **Il conto, per favore.**
il KON-to
The bill, please.
LISTEN → p. 12

6 **Basta così, grazie.**
BA-sta ko-ZI
That's all, thanks.
LISTEN → p. 16

7 **Scusi, dov'è...?**
SKU-zi · do-VE
Excuse me, where is...?
LISTEN → p. 19

8 **Buon appetito!**
bwon ap-pe-TI-to
Enjoy your meal!
LISTEN → p. 24

9 **Non ho capito.**
non o ka-PI-to
I didn't understand.
LISTEN → p. 27

10 **Sto imparando l'italiano.**
sto im-pa-RAN-do li-ta-LYA-no
I'm learning Italian.
LISTEN → p. 28

SITUATION 1

Walking in · *Entrare*

Shops, cafés, offices, someone's home

In Italy, walking into a small space is a little social moment: you usually greet whoever is there, even in a shop where you know no one.

Buongiorno! / Buonasera!

bwon-JOR-no · bwo-na-SE-ra

LISTEN

Hello (polite)

Buongiorno in the morning, buonasera later on. There's no fixed time to switch, and people disagree!

Salve!

SAL-ve

LISTEN

Hello

Neutral: not too formal, not too friendly. Works any time of day.

Permesso?

per-MES-so

LISTEN

May I come in?

At the door of a home or an office.

continues ↠

Posso?

POS-so

LISTEN

May I?

Point at a chair, a magazine, a product. One word does it all.

Sto solo guardando, grazie.

sto SO-lo gwar-DAN-do

LISTEN

I'm just looking, thanks.

Arrivederci! Buona giornata!

ar-ri-ve-DER-chi · BWO-na jor-NA-ta

LISTEN

Goodbye! Have a nice day!

Saying goodbye on the way out matters as much as the hello.

IN A SMALL SHOP

LISTEN

You	Buongiorno!
Shop owner	Buongiorno, prego! *Hello, how can I help?*
You	Sto solo guardando, grazie.
Shop owner	Prego, prego! *Please, go ahead!*

continues ↠

AT A FRIEND'S HOME

LISTEN

You	Permesso?
Your friend	Avanti, avanti! Entra! *Come in, come in!*
You	Grazie!

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

Salve is Latin: it comes from *salvē*, "be well". The Romans already used it to say hello.

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

Guests say **"Permesso?"** at the door even when they've been invited. The host answers **"Avanti!"** (come in!) or **"Prego!"**.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 2

At the café · *Al bar*

Coffee, a quick snack, a chat

An Italian *bar* is not a pub: it's where people stop for a coffee, often standing at the counter, from early in the morning.

Un caffè, per favore.

kaf-FE · per fa-VO-re

LISTEN

An espresso, please.

In Italy "un caffè" is an espresso. For a long coffee, ask for "un caffè americano".

Al banco o al tavolo?

al BAN-ko · al TA-vo-lo

LISTEN

At the counter or at a table?

The barista may ask you. At the counter it's quicker and cheaper.

Pago adesso o dopo?

PA-go a-DES-so · DO-po

LISTEN

Do I pay now or later?

Every bar does it its own way: when in doubt, just ask.

continues ↠

Ecco lo scontrino.

EK-ko lo skon-TRI-no

LISTEN

Here's the receipt.

In busy bars you pay first, then give the receipt to the barista.

Quant'è?

kwan-TE

LISTEN

How much is it?

Cosa prendi?

KO-za PREN-di

LISTEN

What are you having?

With friends. With people you don't know: "Cosa prende?"

Offro io!

OF-fro I-o

LISTEN

It's on me!

continues ↠

AT THE COUNTER

LISTEN

You	Buongiorno! Un caffè, per favore.
Cashier	Al banco o al tavolo? *At the counter or at a table?*
You	Al banco.
Cashier	Ecco lo scontrino. *Here's your receipt.*
You	Un caffè, per favore. *(to the barista, showing the receipt)*
Barista	Ecco a lei! *Here you are!*

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

Italians don't say "I'll pay for you": they say **"Offro io"**, *I offer*. Between friends there's often a little friendly fight to pay, and it usually ends with **"La prossima volta offri tu"**.

continues ↠

WITH AN ITALIAN FRIEND

LISTEN

Friend	Cosa prendi? *What are you having?*
You	Un caffè. E tu?
Friend	Anch'io. Offro io! *Me too. It's on me!*
You	No, dai, offro io!
Friend	Ma figurati! La prossima volta offri tu. *Don't be silly! You'll pay next time.*
You	Va bene, grazie!

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

The same coffee can cost more if you sit down, sometimes double: at a table you pay for the service too. Bars must display their prices, so you can check before you sit. At the table you usually pay at the end; at the counter, often first, at the cash desk.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 3

Eating out · *A tavola*

Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias

At an Italian restaurant nobody rushes you: the table is yours for the whole evening.

Un tavolo per due, per favore.

un TA-vo-lo per DU-e · per fa-VO-re

LISTEN

A table for two, please.

Often the waiter asks first: "Quanti siete?", how many are you?

Per me...

per ME

LISTEN

For me...

The easiest way to order: "Per me le tagliatelle."

continues ↠

Cosa ci consiglia?

KO-za chi kon-SI-lya

LISTEN

What do you recommend?

Waiters like this question. Good for the dish of the day.

Ancora un po' d'acqua, per favore.

an-KO-ra un PO DAK-kwa

LISTEN

A little more water, please.

Water isn't free: you order a bottle, "naturale" (still) or "frizzante" (sparkling).

Il conto, per favore.

il KON-to

LISTEN

The bill, please.

Possiamo pagare separatamente?

pos-SYA-mo pa-GA-re se-pa-ra-ta-MEN-te

LISTEN

Can we pay separately?

continues ↠

ORDERING

LISTEN

Waiter	Buonasera! Quanti siete? *Good evening! How many are you?*
You	Siamo in due. *There are two of us.*
Waiter	Prego, da questa parte. *This way, please.*
Waiter	Cosa prendete? *What will you have?*
You	Cosa ci consiglia?
Waiter	Le tagliatelle al ragù sono molto buone. *The tagliatelle with ragù are very good.*
You	Allora per me le tagliatelle. *Then the tagliatelle for me.*
Your friend	Anche per me. *Me too.*
Waiter	Da bere? *Something to drink?*
You	Acqua naturale, per favore.

continues ↠

AT THE END

LISTEN

You	Scusi! Il conto, per favore.
Waiter	Subito! *Right away!*
You	Possiamo pagare separatamente?
Waiter	Certo. *Of course.*

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

"Facciamo alla romana!" means "let's split the bill equally". Some people use it to mean "everyone pays for what they had": Italians don't always agree!

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

The waiter won't bring the bill until you ask for it: it's not bad service, it's good manners. On the bill you'll often see the **coperto**, a small charge per person: it has to be written on the menu.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 4

Shopping · *Al mercato e nei negozi*

Markets, delis, small shops

At the market you buy by weight and by the piece, and the seller is happy to help you choose.

Quanto costa?

KWAN-to KO-sta

How much is it?

LISTEN

Un etto di prosciutto, per favore.

un ET-to di pro-SHUT-to

A hundred grams of ham, please.

Ham, salami and cheese are sold by the "etto".

LISTEN

Mezzo chilo di pomodori.

MED-dzo KI-lo di po-mo-DO-ri

Half a kilo of tomatoes.

LISTEN

continues ↠

Posso assaggiare?

POS-so as-sad-JA-re

LISTEN

Can I taste it?

At the cheese or salami counter, people often ask.

Altro?

AL-tro

LISTEN

Anything else?

The seller's favourite word.

Basta così, grazie.

BA-sta ko-ZI

LISTEN

That's all, thanks.

Lo prendo.

lo PREN-do

LISTEN

I'll take it.

The same verb as at the café: "prendere" works for buying, eating and drinking.

Posso pagare con la carta?

POS-so pa-GA-re kon la KAR-ta

LISTEN

Can I pay by card?

continues ↠

AT THE MARKET STALL

LISTEN

Seller	Buongiorno! Dica! *Good morning! What can I get you?*
You	Mezzo chilo di pomodori, per favore.
Seller	Questi? *These ones?*
You	Sì, grazie.
Seller	Altro?
You	Basta così. Quant'è?
Seller	Due euro. *Two euros.*
You	Ecco. Grazie! *Here you are. Thanks!*

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

Etto comes from *ettogrammo*, 100 grams. Italians rarely say "200 grammi": they say **"due etti"**.

continues ↠

AT THE DELI COUNTER

LISTEN

You	Un etto di prosciutto, per favore.
Seller	Crudo o cotto? *Cured or cooked?*
You	Crudo. Posso assaggiare il formaggio?
Seller	Certo! *Of course!*
You	Buono! Lo prendo. Posso pagare con la carta?
Seller	Sì, certo.

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

At a market stall, you usually don't touch the fruit and vegetables: you say what you want and the seller picks it for you. At the supermarket you choose yourself, but with the plastic gloves you find next to the scales.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 5

Getting around · *In giro*

Streets, buses, trains

Italian city centres are small: you walk a lot, and take a bus or a train to go further.

Scusi, dov'è...?

SKU-zi · do-VE

LISTEN

Excuse me, where is...?

"Scusi" with people you don't know, "Scusa" with friends.

È lontano?

E lon-TA-no

LISTEN

Is it far?

Dove si compra il biglietto?

DO-ve si KOM-pra il bi-LYET-to

LISTEN

Where can I buy a ticket?

continues ↠

Un biglietto per Firenze, per favore.

un bi-LYET-to per fi-REN-tse

A ticket to Florence, please.

LISTEN

Da che binario parte?

da ke bi-NA-ryo PAR-te

Which platform does it leave from?

LISTEN

Questo autobus va in centro?

KWE-sto AU-to-bus va in CHEN-tro

Does this bus go to the centre?

LISTEN

A che fermata devo scendere?

a ke fer-MA-ta DE-vo SHEN-de-re

Which stop do I get off at?

LISTEN

Devo convalidare il biglietto?

DE-vo kon-va-li-DA-re

Do I need to validate the ticket?

LISTEN

continues ↠

BUYING A BUS TICKET

LISTEN

You	Scusi, dove si compra il biglietto?
Passer-by	Dal tabaccaio, lì a destra. *At the tobacconist's, there on the right.*
You	Buongiorno! Due biglietti per l'autobus, per favore.
Tobacconist	Ecco a lei. *Here you are.*

ON THE BUS

LISTEN

You	Scusi, questo autobus va in centro?
Passenger	Sì, sì. *Yes, it does.*
You	A che fermata devo scendere per il Duomo? *Which stop for the cathedral?*
Passenger	Alla terza. *The third one.*
You	Grazie mille!

continues ↠

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

Binario means "two by two", from Latin: a railway track is made of two rails. In Italian stations you look for your **binario**, not your platform.

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

In many cities bus tickets aren't sold on the bus: you buy them at the **tabaccheria**, the shop with a big T sign, or at a newsstand. Paper tickets must be validated in the little machine when you get on, or you can be fined even if you paid.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 6

At an Italian home · *Ospite di italiani*

Lunch or dinner with friends

Being invited to someone's home is one of the best ways to see real Italy. A few words make you the perfect guest.

Posso portare qualcosa?

POS-so por-TA-re KWAL-ko-za

LISTEN

Can I bring something?

The answer will almost certainly be "No, tranquillo, non portare niente!", don't worry, don't bring anything!

Grazie dell'invito!

GRA-tsye del-lin-VI-to

LISTEN

Thanks for inviting me!

Ho portato un dolce.

o por-TA-to un DOL-che

LISTEN

I brought a dessert.

The answer is almost always "Ma no, non dovevi!", you shouldn't have!

continues ↠

Buon appetito!

bwon ap-pe-TI-to

LISTEN

Enjoy your meal!

Said before starting. The answer: "Grazie, altrettanto!", you too!

Buonissimo!

bwo-NIS-si-mo

LISTEN

Delicious!

The best compliment for the cook.

Ancora un po'?

an-KO-ra un PO

LISTEN

A little more?

You'll hear this one a lot.

No, grazie, sono pieno / piena.

SO-no PYE-no · PYE-na

LISTEN

No, thanks, I'm full.

"Pieno" if you're a man, "piena" if you're a woman.

continues ↠

Posso aiutare?

POS-so a-yu-TA-re



Can I help?

Offer to help clear the table: the host will probably say no, but they'll appreciate it.

ARRIVING LISTEN

Host	Ciao! Entra, entra! *Hi! Come in, come in!*
You	Ciao! Grazie dell'invito. Ho portato un dolce.
Host	Ma no, non dovevi! Grazie! *Oh, you shouldn't have! Thank you!*

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

Fare la scarpetta, "to make the little shoe", means wiping the sauce from your plate with a piece of bread. At home it's a compliment to the cook; in an elegant restaurant, better not.

continues ↠

AT DINNER

LISTEN

Host	Buon appetito!
You	Grazie, altrettanto!
You	Buonissimo!
Host	Ancora un po'?
You	No, grazie, sono pieno.
Host	Dai, solo un po'! *Come on, just a little!*
You	Va bene, solo un po'! *OK, just a little!*

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

When you ask "Posso portare qualcosa?", your host will say no. Bring something anyway: a bottle of wine, a dessert, or, for Sunday lunch, a tray of **paste**, small pastries from the local pasticceria, wrapped in paper with a ribbon. It's always welcome.

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

SITUATION 7

When you don't understand · *Quando non capisci*

Because it will happen, and that's fine

Italians speak fast, but they're patient with people who try. These phrases keep the conversation going.

Non ho capito.

non o ka-PI-to

I didn't understand.



Può ripetere più piano, per favore?

PWO ri-PE-te-re PYU PYA-no

Can you say it again more slowly, please?



continues ↠

Cosa vuol dire...?

KO-za vwol DI-re

LISTEN

What does ... mean?

Come si dice...?

KO-me si DI-che

LISTEN

How do you say...?

Point at something: "Come si dice questo?"

Può scriverlo?

PWO SKRI-ver-lo

LISTEN

Can you write it down?

Very useful for addresses, times and prices.

Sto imparando l'italiano.

sto im-pa-RAN-do li-ta-LYA-no

LISTEN

I'm learning Italian.

If someone switches to English, add: "Possiamo parlare in italiano?", can we speak Italian? Most people are happy to.

continues ↠

TOO FAST! LISTEN

Clerk	Il treno delle tre è soppresso, deve prendere quello delle tre e mezza dal binario sei.
You	Scusi, non ho capito. Può ripetere più piano, per favore?
Clerk	Certo! Il treno delle tre è soppresso. *Of course! The three o'clock train is soppresso.*
You	Cosa vuol dire "soppresso"?
Clerk	Cancellato. Non parte. *Cancelled. It doesn't leave.*
You	Ah! Grazie.

CURIOSITÀ LINGUISTICA

To ask someone to repeat, Italians say **"Come?"** or **"Come, scusi?"**, or, more politely, **"Prego?"**. So *prego* doesn't only mean "you're welcome": it also means "please, go ahead" and "sorry, what did you say?".

continues ↠

LET'S SPEAK ITALIAN

LISTEN

Clerk Hello! Where are you going?

You Sto imparando l'italiano. Possiamo parlare in italiano?

Clerk Certo! Brava! Dove va?

Of course! Well done! Where are you going?

CURIOSITÀ CULTURALE

Two little words you'll hear everywhere. **Boh**: "I don't know, who knows", often with a shrug. **Dai**: "come on!", to insist, to encourage, or when you can't believe something. You've already heard it twice in this phrasebook!

Reading on paper?
Scan to listen

Ready for more?

These phrases are a first step. If you want to really speak Italian, I can help.

Speak, don't just read.

In my lessons you talk from day one, about real things, with real Italian: one-to-one lessons built around you, or conversation courses in small groups. Book a free 20-minute call to start: we talk, we find your path, and we plan it together, with no commitment.

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A presto!

Riccardo · @italy.explained