

# Training Materials

## Italy Program



\*Note: When you click the links in this training, we may receive a commission at no extra cost to you.

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## Timeline

*You've been accepted to the Rome Abroad program — now what?*

We've emailed you this info, but here it is for reference:

1. Text a photo of your valid ID to Rome Abroad on [WhatsApp](#)
2. Make sure you have a profile picture on [WhatsApp](#)
3. Turn on WhatsApp notifications
4. [Apply for a passport](#) if you don't have one
5. Sign your [letter of intent](#) & fill out your profile\*
6. Read all these training materials & [take the quiz](#)
7. We'll send you family profiles via WhatsApp or email
8. Let us know which family you'd like to meet
9. Meet your host family via video call
10. Get to know them better through calls, texts, and video chats
11. Sign the agreement
12. Keep fostering your relationship with your host family
13. [Book your flight](#)
14. [Book a departure meeting](#) at least 2 weeks
15. Introduce yourself in the group chat to make friends and travel plans

\*Tips for writing your letter to a host family:

- Use spell check!
- Tell them about yourself, where you're from
- Describe your family, friends, pets, your hometown, etc.
- Tell them about your hobbies and interests, any special skills, passions, or talents
- Talk about your interests in sports, music, books, movies, etc.
- Describe what kind of work you've done or are currently doing
- Tell them about what you're currently studying or what you studied in school
- Give lots of details about your childcare experience (kids' ages, duration, and type of care)
- Talk about your plans for the future
- Explain your motivation for wanting to live abroad!

Additional resources:

- [www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com) — American who is pro traveler of Europe
- [International Living](#) — Information about living in [Italy](#)

Want to stay longer than 90 days?

- Check out the requirements for the visa and then let Sara know (this only applies if you are staying longer than 90 days)

**Note: timing matters!**

- **Be sure to sign the family agreement BEFORE you book your flight!**

## Video Tips

*Guidelines for having a great video introduction*

1. Once you have decided which family you'd like to meet, we'll send you their contact information
2. Then you'll send them a text/email to set up a video call

a. You might say something like:

**"Hi [host mum's name], my name is \_\_\_\_ and I'd love to set up a video call to meet you guys. I really like how your family [something you liked in their profile].**

**I live in [your city] which is [time difference] hours behind [their city]. Could we have a video call this week? I'm available [option 1], [option 2], or [option 3]. If none of those work for you, let me know what works and I'll do my best to accommodate your schedule!**

**The easiest way for me would be on WhatsApp and my number is \_\_\_\_\_. If you prefer a different method, just let me know. I'm looking forward to meeting you!"**

3. Pay close attention to your WhatsApp and email during this time so you can set up a video call
4. Keep us posted on when you're having the call and we can send a Google calendar invite via email (this really helps with the time difference!)
5. This call is not too long (usually 20-30 min) to help you see if you'd be a good fit
6. Possible agenda for the video call:
  - a. Introductions
  - b. Host mom/dad will describe their family, daily routines, hopes, and general expectations

- c. Traveler will introduce themselves, describe their experience in childcare, explain previous travel experience, and express their reasons for wanting to live abroad with a host family
  - d. Both Traveler and Host will ask each other a few questions (check out [our list](#) to get ideas of what to ask!)
  - e. End call
  - f. Keep talking! Ask them questions via text, potentially plan another video call, and get to know each other
7. After the call, send them a follow-up text message
  - a. You might say “Hi\_\_\_\_\_, it was so great to meet you and hear about your family! Your kids sound like \_\_\_\_\_. I’m looking forward to getting to know you better and \_\_\_\_\_.”
8. We’ll ask you for feedback about the call
9. If the family likes you and you like them, we’ll prepare agreements for signature
10. If things didn’t click, we’ll explore other family options

Be prepared to describe yourself! Here are some possible topics:

- Where you're from
- Your family, friends, and pets
- Your hobbies, any special skills, passions, or talents you have
- Your interests in sports, music, books, movies, etc.
- What kind of work you've done or are currently doing
- What you're currently studying or what you studied in school
- Details about your childcare experience (kids' ages, duration, and type of care)
- Your plans for the future
- Your motivation for wanting to live abroad!

Choose good surroundings:

- What can be seen in the background?
- Consider the image you’re projecting
- Make sure everything around you is clean and tidy
- Remove distractions
- Have an excellent wifi connection
- Be sure that:
  - The lighting is good
  - Your face is clearly visible
  - You can be easily heard
  - You are indoors

Look nice:

- Put in the extra effort to properly dress yourself head to toe
- You'll feel more professional and exude that confidence
- The focus is going to be on your face

Be aware of your body language:

- Look directly at the camera lens, rather than at yourself (especially when you're speaking)
- This gives the impression that you're focused on the person you're speaking with
- Although it's easy to look away when answering questions, try to keep your eyes on the camera
- Refrain from touching your face and hair (this doesn't look professional)

Smile, smile, smile:

- Host families want their Rome Abroad Travelers to be engaging and energetic with their children
- How you act on the video call will largely affect their impression of you
- Learning English through interaction with a boring person is no fun for anyone
- Smile and be friendly — smiling will also help you feel less nervous!
- Ask questions to get to know them better
- Being shy or quiet is going to give your host family the impression that you're going to be quiet and shy with their kids
- So relax, be yourself, and engage with them

WhatsApp profile:

- Think of your profile like a type of resume — is it clean?
- What are you representing in your picture and status?
- Be sure to have a profile photo!
- It adds a personal touch to your conversations and will be nice for your host family
- After you and your host family have signed the agreements, we can send their contact information on WhatsApp

## Questions

*The goal of asking questions is to show your interest and ensure that you and your host family have the same expectations*

1. Why do you want to host an au pair?
2. Why do you want your children to learn English?

3. What are your main goals for hosting someone who speaks English?
4. What is something you're worried or concerned about?
5. What are your child's interests/favorite things to do?
6. What's the best way that your child learns?
7. What is a typical day like with you and your family?
8. Do you or does anyone in your family have allergies or dietary restrictions?
9. Do you have pets?
10. What is your child(ren)'s current level of English?
11. What should I expect for pocket money?
12. How many Rome Abroad Travelers/au pairs have you hosted before?
13. How did your children get along with previous au pairs/babysitters?
14. What is your area/suburb like? Do you know of any au pairs nearby?
15. What places can I visit with your children? (playgrounds? play groups? library?)
16. What is public transport like?
17. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss with me?

After your interview, please THANK the family for their time!

**Note: Not all at once**

- **You want this to feel like a conversation, not an interrogation. So just pick a few questions for the first call. You can ask more in a subsequent call or via text message. You can also ask Rome Abroad about some of the logistics.**

## WhatsApp

### *How to use this important app*

What is WhatsApp?

- Multi-purpose messaging, social media, and mobile payment app
- One of the world's biggest apps, hundreds of millions of users

What do we use WhatsApp for?

- For texts or calls with Rome Abroad, use [WhatsApp](#) (email is fine too)
- To introduce yourself to your host family
- The group chat for everyone in the Rome Abroad program
- Add yourself in your program chat if you aren't in already! (Select both Italy & Europe for the season and year you're going)
  - SEASON | YEAR | Italy - ask Sara for this link if you aren't added already
  - SEASON | YEAR | Europe - ask Sara for this link if you aren't added already

- To make weekend trip plans with other Rome Abroad Travelers
- To keep in touch with your host family during your time there

Important benefits of WhatsApp:

- Message friends and family for free
- WhatsApp uses WiFi (or data if WiFi isn't available) to send messages and make calls
- Reply to specific messages earlier in the thread (swipe right on a message to do this)
- You can create group chats for specific weekend trips, or just for people in your city
- Really great way to make friends and network
- You can create group chats for specific weekend trips, or just for people in your city

WhatsApp features:

- Texts
- Vocal messages
- Video calls
- Nameable group chats up to 256 people
- See when your messages have been delivered and read
- Share photos, videos, PDFs, documents, spreadsheets, etc. (up to 100 MB)
- Check out the [features online](#)

**Note: TURN ON NOTIFICATIONS so you can keep responses timely**

## Tips for Living With a Host Family

*Do's and don'ts for having a good relationship with your host family*

- Do: Interact with their children
  - The sky's the limit when you ask how to interact with children to help them learn a language.
  - Rule number one: it should be fun and not feel like a mandated, required class. Make it fun!
  - Make bubbles, paint, go for a walk, tell stories and jokes, read books, watch a movie (occasionally), and be creative in your activities!
  - These kids often have very intense schedules! Let English be a fun time, not another pressure-filled activity.
- Do: Care about them



- Anyone, even (and especially) a young child can feel when you're being sincere and when you're faking it
  - Believe it or not, the majority of the time, they will know when you're having fun with them and when you consider it a chore to be with them
  - So relax and have fun!
  - Ask them questions about them, open up and tell them about yourself
  - Think of your time with them as a learning and growing experience (for them and for you!) and it will be much more enjoyable for both of you
- Do: Talk. A LOT.
    - Repeated feedback from host families is they would like Travelers to talk more
    - The host family's main goals are to help their children:
      - Improve English speaking skills
      - Be exposed to another culture
    - You can help them do both by talking, talking, talking, all the time
    - Good ways to ensure a lot of talking:
      - Have a plethora of stories (both fictional and from your personal life) that you can tell over and over again
      - Do an activity with the child(ren) and narrate what you're doing
      - Ask them a lot of questions and talk about their answers and ideas ('what if' scenarios are fun to do here)
  - Do: Be patient but keep tabs on their progress
    - Helping children learn English doesn't need to be intense or even charted
    - If they are having trouble with certain sounds, words, or phrases, be patient
    - Even native speakers take a few years to learn their own language (heck, it took Einstein four!)
    - So be patient and kind in your corrections
    - If the child is making a mistake, just repeat the phrase in the correct way without pointing out their mistake
      - For example:
        - Child: It go like this. [Incorrect]
        - Traveler: Oh, it goes like this? [Correct]
      - Doing this will help them naturally correct their speech without making English a negative experience
    - In your own mind or in a private notebook, keep track of how well the child is progressing in their speech
    - If they're having trouble with a difficult sound like 'th,' make note of it and chart their progress

- Do: Be helpful in the daily routines
  - When it comes to mealtime, offer to help set the table, cook something, or do the dishes afterward
  - Remember: you're a guest in their home but this doesn't mean you'll be served like you're staying at a hotel
  - Be helpful and be aware of ways to help
  
- Don't: Get angry
  - Kids will be kids; they will probably do something annoying or unfriendly at some point
  - Depending on their maturity, this could include running away, screaming, or simply being irritating
  - Whenever this happens, remember to be the bigger person
  - If you need to, take a break from the situation
  - Talk to the parents about misbehavior from the perspective of *we*
    - I.e. "[Child] is very good at [note a positive]. However, I noticed that [Child] acted in this way in this situation [describe]...How can I help him act more calmly in those situations? What works for you?"
    - Come up with a plan together of how to handle the behavior
    - Stay in touch with your program director about these situations
    - Work through problems with the long-term in mind
  - If the child physically hits you or hurts you, *tell Rome Abroad right away*
  
- Don't: Stay shut up in your room
  - The last thing a host family wants is to go through the whole process of finding you and getting to know you before you take a flight to their home is for you to spend the whole time in your room
  - Remember: this arrangement is a very friendly one, so they're not going to force you to come out of hiding
  - However, you should be aware of how much time you spend in your room and how much time you're actually interacting with the family
  
- Don't: Leave a mess
  - This is probably common sense for most house guests, but we like to err on the side of being overly clear
  - If you make a mess, clean up after yourself
  - If you see a mess, either help the child clean up after themselves or take the initiative to clean up

- Don't see this as "I'm being the family maid;" see it as "I am being helpful and considerate"
- Leave things better than you found them
- Do: Remember to be grateful
  - Saying thank you goes a long way — in the program and in life generally
  - Those two words, when spoken sincerely, can make the difference between a positive experience and a negative one
  - We bet you can remember a time when you did something nice for someone and it didn't even cross their mind to say a simple thanks — and we're sure you can also think of a time when someone went out of their way to tell you thank you

**Note: Who would you want to stay in your home?**

## Flight Tips

*Our best resources as well as tips and tricks for getting great flights!*

General ideas:

- It doesn't always matter to get to your final destination right away
- Once you're in Europe, it can be *very* cheap to get little flights to and from main cities
  - You can save money
  - You can see something you didn't plan on
  - Keep in mind: it might take more time to get to your final destination
    - But have an open mind and you'll have an adventure along the way!
- Remember the **Rule of Flexibility**:
  - The more of these factors you have, the cheaper deals available
    - Less luggage (carry on or less)
    - Book in advance (3-8 months)
    - Extra time invested in searching for flights
    - Long travel time (getting from A to B)
    - Flexible dates
  - If you aren't willing to compromise on these factors, your airfare might be more

Be flexible!

- Most people book flights in this order:
  - Pick their dates, then destination, and see what prices come up > this usually results in high costs!

- Do it backwards if you want a cheap flight to Europe/Asia/Australia:
- See what cheap fares are available to the overall area in your general timeframe
  - Use the "flexible dates" search feature available on a lot of sites
- Figure out the small connections to get you to your final destination
  - Don't rule out trains/buses!

When should I book my flight?

- After your agreement is signed
- When you see a great deal
- International flights: ideally 2-8 months in advance
  - If you're planning to go in the summer, you can even book up to 11 months ahead
  - If you're going between September and May, you can book a little closer
  - Remember: "If there's a flight you need that's coming up soon but you still haven't booked, setting a 21-day deadline is best practice. But if you're hoping for legitimately cheap, not just cheaper, flights, planning further in advance is the way to go." — Scott's Cheap Flights
- Remember: prices tend to increase about a month or two before departure

When is the cheapest time to fly?

- January through mid-May
- September through early December

When is the most expensive time to fly?

- Peak summer (mid-June through mid-August)
- Christmas/New Year's

Cheapest days to fly (generally speaking):

- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday
- Friday and Sunday usually the most expensive days

Great resources for finding flights on your own:

- [Kiwi.com](https://www.kiwi.com)
- [Skyscanner](https://www.skyscanner.com)
- [Google Flights](https://www.google.com/flights)
- [Kayak](https://www.kayak.com)
- [Momondo](https://www.momondo.com)
- [Southwest](https://www.southwest.com) (their flights don't show up in general search engines like Expedia, Orbitz, etc.)

- [Allegiant Airlines](#) (for cheap flights from SLC/Provo to LAX, SFO, etc.)

Great organizations for finding flights for you:

- [Scott's Cheap Flights](#)
- [Pomelo](#)
- [Flights from Home](#) (out of SLC & Vegas)
- [Hopper app](#)
- [Cheap Fly Club](#)
- [I Know The Pilot](#)
- [Matt's Flights](#)

**Note: "Cross the ocean as cheaply as possible!" — Scott's Cheap Flights**

## Basic Italian

### *Basic words and essential phrases*

Pronunciation guide:

- Vowels
  - a – long ah, like in "father" – mamma
  - e – like e in set, a in say – bello, sera
  - i – like ee in meet – amico
  - o – like o in open – sole
  - u – like oo in food – uno
- Consonants – Most are pronounced as they are in English, except the following:
  - ci or ce – like church – ciao, cello, piacere
  - c – like c in car – come
  - gi or ge – like g in general – giorno, gelato
  - g – like goal – gatto, gusto
  - h – always silent – ho, hai, hotel
  - r – rolled like a Spanish r – treno

English	Italian	English	Italian	English	Italian
Good morning/day	Buon giorno	Good night	Buona notte	This	Questo, questa
Good evening	Buona sera	How are you?	Come stai?	That	Quello, quella
Hello/Hi	Ciao (informal), Salve	Goodbye	Arrivederci, Ciao (informal)	These	Questi, queglii
I like it	Mi piace	Left, Right	Sinistra, Destra	Those	Quelli, quelle
Yes	Si	Good luck	Buona fortuna	one	uno
No	No	How many?	Quanti?	two	due
You	Tu / Lei (formal)	How much (does this cost)?	Quanto (questo costa)?	three	tre
I am	Io sono (ee-oh sono)	Really/Truly	Davvero	four	quattro
Please	Per favore	Let's go	Andiamo	five	cinque
Thank you (very much)	Grazie (mille)	Very good, congratulations!	Bravo, complimenti!	six	sei
You're welcome	Prego	Where?	Dov'è?	seven	sette
Sorry	Mi dispiace Scusa, Scusi (formal)	Keep quiet	Silenzio	eight	otto
I don't understand	Non capisco (non kapisko)	What is your name?	Come ti chiami?	nine	nove
I would like	Vorrei (voray)	My name is...	Mi chiamo...	ten	dieci

s between vowels – like a z sound in rose – casa, rosa  
s – like sit – pasta  
z starting a word – like ds in pads – zero, zucchini  
z – ts in cats – grazie, stazione

- Combinations  
ch – like the k in key – chiave  
gh – like goal – spaghetti  
gn – like ny in canyon – signora, gnocchi  
gli – like lli in million – figlio  
sci or sce – like shut – pesce, sciare  
sc – like sk in skip – scusi

Helpful words trickier to explain:

- Allora – so, then, well  
You'll hear this *all. the. time.* Allora is a great filler word that Italians use all the time. Kind of like how we use the word 'so' in English. You'll pick up on the meaning as you hear it.
- Quindi – so, therefore, next  
It basically means 'therefore' as in: *Stai per sole, quindi indossa la protezione solare* (It's going to be sunny, so wear sunscreen.) But quindi also means next, or then as in: *Ho messo le scarpe, quindi sono uscita.*
- Va bene – very well, all right  
You'll also hear this all the time!
- Ecco – here, voila  
The Italian equivalent of 'here you are or 'there we go.'
- Aspetta – wait  
This one is definitely handy to know, especially with kids!
- Boh – um, hmm, I don't know  
Super informal word for 'I don't know'
- Cavolo – cabbage (crap)  
A milder word instead of cazzo (s\*\*\*) that means basically the same thing. Kind of like our 'crap' in English.

## Italian Culture

*When in Rome, do as the Romans do...*

Mealtime:

- Breakfast
  - Very small, and very quick (i.e. cappuccino and a pastry)
  - Italians usually have something sweet for breakfast
  - Note: they don't drink cappuccino past 11 am!
- Lunch
  - Eaten anywhere from 12 pm – 4 pm
  - Usually accompanied by a siesta (a 90-min to two-hour break in the afternoon, sometimes taken with a nap)
    - Most businesses are closed during this time
- Dinner
  - A big deal; it's a social event
  - Served usually around 8 or 9 pm for families with kids, but can be as late as 10 pm
  - Lasts long into the evening, especially if with friends
  - Each dish is served separately so don't fill up on the first dish :)
  - It's polite to help with setting the table and preparing, as well as clean up
  - At restaurants, don't expect to bring leftovers home (unless you're doing a whole pizza to go). The restaurants expect you to eat it all because generally the portion sizes are meant to be eaten in one sitting.
- Cafes and restaurants
  - When you're ordering at a coffee shop, walk up to the bar and say your order (usually loudly!) to the barista
  - Observation is the key! Some cafes have you pay first, then bring your receipt to the counter. Others have you drink your coffee and then go to the cash register to pay. Pay attention to what other people are doing and do likewise if you're not sure.
  - Tip: if you drink your coffee at the bar, it's cheaper than if you sit down
  - If you love iced coffee, the closest thing is called a *caffé shakerato* (espresso shaken with ice and simple syrup)
    - There may be cafes with more 'American' options too
  - If a restaurant serves bread with the pasta, it's to *fare la scarpetta*. This literally means "make the little boot," which means to scoop up the leftover pasta sauce with your bread
  - Aperitivo is Italian happy hour! Served generally from 6 to 9 pm (ish) and your drink comes with either a tray of food or a buffet! Our Rome Abroad graduate from [The Artful Everyday](#) suggests you try an Aperol Spritz or a Negroni!
  - An 'open container policy' means you can have a glass of wine in a piazza or along the river

#### The siesta:

- Afternoon break when not only shops but also most restaurants and cafes are closed
- This is due to the heat (no one wants to work during the heat of the day — especially since air conditioning is believed to cause health issues!)
- Usually 1 pm to 4 pm
- Many working people will come home for lunch and a nap at this time — ask your host parents what their habits are

#### Greetings:

- Double-cheek kiss greeting do's and don'ts:
  - Do lean left offering your right cheek, then switch to the other side
  - Don't actually kiss the other person's cheek (it's an "air kiss")
  - The more you know someone, the more cheek kisses
    - 1 kiss = a quick hello or goodbye to a friend, acquaintance/stranger
    - 2 kisses = friend/close friend/family member
    - 3+ kisses = very close friend/family member
- "Ciao" is pretty casual, used among people that you know well
- "Buongiorno" (Good day) is more formal
  - When entering and exiting shops, greet the store owner
  - "Buongiorno" for during the day
  - "Buona sera" for the late afternoon/evening
  - "Salve" also can be a formal farewell

#### Are they angry all the time?

- Italians may sound angry, but they usually aren't
- In general, Italian culture is much more blunt (or are you more sugar-coated?)
- If your host mom gives you some feedback/criticism, don't take it personally!
- Italians speak their mind and rarely hold grudges
- They're just telling you what they think, so incorporate their feedback and move on :)

#### General mindsets:

- Family is super important, usually grandparents live close and are fairly involved
- Italians are *very* proud of their culture, food, beauty of the land, art, history, etc. so they like telling you about it
- They *love* hearing what you love about Italy (it butters them up like nothing else!)
- One of the worst things you could do is to not know anything about Italian culture or history — Italians will literally be hurt by this so educate yourself! :)



History and literature:

- [Wikipedia: History of Italy](#)
- [Wikipedia: Dante's Divine Comedy](#)

Famous Italians:

- [Galileo](#)
- [Michelangelo](#)
- [Leonardo Da Vinci](#)
- [Amerigo Vespucci](#)
- [Andrea Bocelli](#)
- [Enrico Fermi](#)
- [Botticelli](#)
- [Bernini](#)
- and more!

## Safety

*A little common sense goes a long way*

Is it safe to live abroad?

- Living abroad can be very safe
- You will be as safe as you are smart
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Tourists naturally attract petty thieves, but if you're wise, you can avoid them
- Listen to your host parents about what places to avoid

Be aware of pickpockets:

- Keep personal belongings close to your body, especially when you're in public areas
- If you're in a crowded area (especially on public transportation) have your backpack or purses on in a way that no one can open it or take it without you noticing
- If you do get ripped off, remember this advice by Rick Steves:
  - "It's best to get over it. You're rich and thieves aren't. You let your guard down and they grab your camera. It ruins your day and you have to buy a new one, while they sell it for a week's wages on their scale. And the score's one to nothing. It's wise to keep a material loss in perspective."
- Remember that the large majority of crimes suffered by tourists are nonviolent and avoidable
- Stay away from dark or deserted places, especially at night

Be prepared before you go:

- Make 2+ photocopies of your passport, any medical/eyesight prescriptions, and flight itinerary
  - Leave one copy of your passport with a family member or trusted friend back home
  - While you travel, leave one copy in your luggage
  - When you get to your host's home, leave your passport there (unless traveling abroad)
  - Carry the copy with you and use as ID when needed (i.e. buying a SIM card)
  - Your driver's license may suffice as ID (when going to a bar, etc. but it's good to have the passport copy just in case)
- Back up your photos frequently as you travel
- Leave your expensive jewelry at home — even if a thief doesn't go for your jewelry specifically, it's a signal to them
- Consider wearing a [money belt](#)
  - It's a small, pouch with a zipper that you wear around your waist underneath your clothes
  - Very handy and gives you the freedom of being hands-free while still carrying your important items safely

Be prepared when you're out and about:

- Leave expensive gear such as a laptop in your host family's home (it's safer there than with you in a backpack on the streets)
- The likelihood of losing something is much greater than having something stolen
  - Always look behind you before leaving any place or form of transportation
  - Go through a mental list when packing and unpacking if you're traveling
- Always be in physical contact with your things
  - Don't set down small valuable items when you're out such as your phone, camera, or wallet
  - If you're eating out, don't place your phone on the table where it's easy to be snatched away
- Secure your bag when you're not moving
  - Loop a strap around your leg or leg of a chair
  - Use lockable zippers, twist-ties, paper clips, or key rings to keep your bag harder for pickpockets
- Be instantly alert anytime there's a commotion — it might be a ruse for thieves to distract tourists

- Also be alert whenever you're in a crowd, especially flea markets and train stations -- places like these are a pickpocket's playground because they are full of opportunities and easy escape exits

#### Be wary of scams:

- There are many subtle ways to be scammed — someone might charge you triple what a good normally costs or they might offer you a deal that sounds too good to be true (hint: it is!)
- NEVER get in an unmarked cab or taxi
- NEVER get in an unmarked cab or taxi
- NEVER get in an unmarked cab or taxi
- If you use Uber/Lyft, make sure everything matches up before getting in the vehicle

#### Money, money, money:

- Be alert whenever money changes hands, even when you withdraw from ATMs
- Cash is safer
- Always know what you are paying for before handing over money
- Be sure to count your change
- Pickpockets can be very clever — don't be fooled by sob stories or official-looking uniforms

#### Drinking guidelines:

- Don't drink alcohol outside your host family's home
- Drinking puts you at risk of making bad choices that may cost you later
- When you're out, NEVER let your drink out of your sight
- ALWAYS be aware of where your drinks come from
- ALWAYS watch your drinks from the bar until they get to you
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Be upfront if someone is buying you drinks or hitting on you and you don't want their attention
- Drink plenty of water

#### Other precautions:

- [Log your travel plans](#) with the State Department
  - This allows the government to send you email alerts about potential problems abroad (i.e. demonstrations, etc.)
- Know how to contact the nearest American Embassy to your city
  - U.S. Embassy in Rome  
via Vittorio Veneto 121

00187 Roma

Phone: (+39) 064-6741

- U.S. Consulate in Milan  
via Principe Amedeo, 2/10  
20121 Milano  
Phone: (+39) 02-29-0351

- Save the emergency numbers for local authorities in your phone
  - Police 112
- There are Facebook Groups to meet others outside the Rome Abroad program
  - Always be cautious meeting people from internet connections
  - If you don't feel good about meeting someone, don't
  - ALWAYS meet in public, safe areas ALWAYS tell your host mom where you'll be, with whom, and when you'll be back
  - Group links:
    - If you're in Milan/the north of Italy: [Au Pair Connection \(Milan\)](#)
    - If you're in Rome/the south of Italy: [Au Pair in Rome/Italy](#)
    - All over Italy: [Au Pair in Italy](#)
  - You can also meet people through your church (many have 'meetinghouse locators' for local branches/groups)

**Note: if your host family is a client of one of our Italian colleagues, you'll probably have additional ways to meet more people**

- An additional (optional) precaution:
  - Consider buying a defensive spray, such as the [D.A.D.® 2](#).
  - Check out how [one Traveler used hers](#) while living abroad
  - Use code ROMEABROAD for \$30 off + free shipping (\$10 value)

## Healthcare

### *How to prepare for the unexpected*

This article is a planning tool and the recommendations provided here are intended as guidelines only. To ensure that all your travel health needs are covered, seek further assistance from your doctor or travel health clinic. This information provided by Rome Abroad is meant to complement, not substitute, the advice of your healthcare provider. Reliance on any information provided by Rome Abroad is solely at your discretion. Always be prepared for any anticipated medical conditions or emergencies before traveling abroad.

All Rome Abroad Travelers should review and update the following vaccinations prior to departure: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Polio, Influenza, and Pneumococcal. We strongly recommend Hepatitis A vaccination for all Rome Abroad Travelers, regardless of destination.

#### Healthcare:

- According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), Italy ranks second **among the top 10** countries for quality health services
  - U.S. ranks at 37th
- Most doctors and pharmacists in Europe speak at least basic English so you shouldn't worry about communication issues
  - Worst case scenario, a doctor whose English isn't wonderful can probably help you get in touch with another doctor who speaks English well
- Italy, like most European countries, has a universal healthcare system
  - This national health plan is called Servizio Sanitario Nazionale and most care is free or low-cost
  - In Italy, healthcare is considered a right
  - This means that everyone pays for healthcare as part of their taxes, so when someone is injured in Italy, they avoid becoming bankrupt with hospital fees
- Although no healthcare system is perfect, it does give peace of mind knowing that everyone is taken care of, even those not from Italy
- So if you are sick or get injured during your adventure, there are healthcare options
- For more information on healthcare, check out tips and insights from [Rick Steves](#)

#### Health insurance:

- Check your international coverage in your insurance policy before you go so you know what to expect
- However, you will "likely have to pay out of pocket for any medical treatment, even if your insurance company provides international health care coverage" ([Rick Steves](#))
- Emergency room fees range from free to small fees to expensive, depending on what treatment you need
- Be sure to get a copy of your hospital bill so that you can file a claim to be reimbursed when you go back home
- Here are two travel insurance companies recommended by [Rick Steves](#):
  - [Travel Guard](#)
  - [Travelex Insurance Services](#)
- If you bought travel insurance, make sure to call the company as soon as possible to report the injury

- Most of the time, travel insurance companies can work directly with the hospital to get your bills paid

#### Emergencies:

- If you have an accident or life-threatening issue, get to a hospital
- If you have a serious accident, call an ambulance
- Emergency phone numbers are listed below:
  - 112 for ambulance
  - 113 for firefighters
  - 118 for police
- Then, contact your travel health insurance company as soon as you can
- Ensure that you have accessible funds to cover upfront fees and adequate [travel health insurance](#)

#### Non-emergency solutions:

- Pharmacy
  - To locate a pharmacy or clinic, you can use Google Maps or ask your host family.
  - Pharmacies are a great option for minor injuries such as: a sore throat, fever, stomach problem, sinus issue, insomnia, blisters, rashes, urinary tract infections, or muscle, joint
  - Pharmacists in Europe can diagnose and prescribe remedies for tons of simple health issues
  - Although some medications might look the same in Europe as their counterparts in the U.S., they can be stronger in Italy so be careful especially when following dosage directions
  - Topical remedies are very common in Europe so if you're experiencing body pains or aches, a pharmacist might prescribe a cream to apply first and foremost
  - Bring ibuprofen with you
- Clinics
  - Health clinics in Europe are generally efficient, effective, and inexpensive
  - Ideal if your issue is beyond a pharmacist, but non-emergency
  - Best place for non-emergency testing
  - Just like clinics in the U.S., clinics in Italy will have you sign in with a receptionist, answer some basic questions, and then wait for a nurse or doctor
  - A clinic visit may have a nominal fee or it might also be free
  - Like the emergency room fee, you should expect to pay this fee even if you're covered through your health insurance company or a special travel policy
  - Like other fees, be sure you get a copy of the bill so you can file a claim when you get home

- Helpful Resources
  - Use the U.S. Embassy's website to see [lists of physicians and hospitals](#) in major cities in Italy
  - [The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers](#) (IAMAT) is another helpful organization
    - You can get a list of English-speaking doctors in more than 90 member countries who charge affordable, standardized fees for medical visits
    - IAMAT membership is free to join
    - Membership is valid for one year and renewable with a donation
    - Check out the fee pricing on their [website](#) and you pay the provider directly at time of visit

#### Vaccinations:

- Required, for your protection and those around you
  - Hepatitis A

#### Before you leave:

- Check your health insurance policy's international coverage
- Research travel insurance and decide if/what type of coverage you'd like
- Consult your physician to determine if you need any travel-related vaccines (such as Hepatitis A)
- Consult your physician to determine if you need any prescriptions refilled

#### Healthy tips for eating and drinking:

- Do eat:
  - Food that is thoroughly cooked and served while hot
  - Fruits, nuts and vegetables you can peel or remove the casing of by yourself
  - Fruit and vegetables that are washed with treated water
  - Pasteurized dairy products
- Don't eat:
  - Raw, undercooked, or cold meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs
  - Bush meat or game meat
  - Condiments or sauces made from raw ingredients or eggs
  - Food that is uncovered, not on ice, or not refrigerated

#### Preventing bug bites (for the summer only):

- Use physical and chemical barriers to prevent mosquitoes bites
- Use a spray, lotion, towelette, or liquid repellent containing 20-30% DEET or 20% Picaridin on exposed skin

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, long clothing (cotton and linen) as much as possible
- Always wear shoes, both indoors and outdoors
- Don't use scented soaps, shampoos, deodorants, perfumes, or after-shaves
- Ensure that all door and window screens do not have holes and are tightly fitted
- When using repellent and sunscreen together, apply sunscreen first and repellent second (after the sunscreen sits on skin for 20 minutes)
  - This could reduce the efficacy of the sunscreen, so it's best to reapply often or wear long clothing

#### Emergency contacts & medical information:

##### For iPhones

- Go to the Health app (already installed on your iPhone)
- Turn on the "Show When Locked" and add your contact info
- Add any medical conditions, notes, allergies, your blood type, height, weight, etc.
- Add emergency contacts
  - Include your host parent(s) for while you are abroad
  - Turn on Auto Call (requires SIM card)
- You can also register to Donate Life America (optional)

##### For Androids

- Go to Settings, and select Users
- Click "Emergency Information" and add any medical conditions, notes, allergies, your blood type, height, weight, etc.
- On the same page, add your contact info
- Click the contacts tab and add emergency contacts
  - Include your host parents for while you are abroad

## Money

### *How to access your funds abroad*

#### Cash vs. Plastic?

- Cash is going to be the easiest way to pay for things
- Day-to-day spending is more cash-based in Europe
- We strongly recommend:



- Paying for as much as possible with cash
- Use ATMs with a flat fee (not percentage)
- Using a bank/debit card that charges no or low fees for international ATM transactions
- Withdraw larger amounts at each transaction
- Then carry with you just what you need that day (leave the majority at home)
- Bonus: the less you use your cards, the less likely your information will be stolen

#### Basic Do's and Don'ts:

- DON'T exchange dollars for foreign cash at a currency exchange booth (it's a rip-off!)
- DON'T carry a lot of cash with you (either traveling to Asia or once you're there)
- DON'T buy foreign currency before your trip
- DO keep your money safe at your host family's home and/or in a [money belt](#)
- DO use local cash where you travel
- DO assume you'll be shortchanged so count your change to be safe
- DO familiarize yourself with the exchange rate (so you can do rough estimates in your head)

#### One option: E-card

- You can apply for this [E-card](#) which works for 80% of local merchants in Italy
- [Read more](#) about this card

#### ATM tips:

- Names: distributeur in France, cashpoint in the UK, and bankomat pretty much everywhere else
- Ideally, withdraw cash from bank-run ATMs that are just outside that bank during the bank's opening hours (in case your card gets eaten so you can go inside for help)
- Bank ATMs usually do not charge usage fees and are generally more secure (cameras)
- Select the UK flag or English options when you withdraw
- Select debit, not credit — avoid extra fees this way
- Avoid "independent" ATMs as they usually have high fees
- Know the daily limits set by your bank at home
  - Bear in mind the exchange rate when calculating your daily limit
- European banks may also have daily withdrawal limits
  - If you need more than this, you'll need to go inside the bank or use multiple cards
- Change
  - Note: A downside of using an ATM is that sometimes only gives larger bills

- If you don't have anything smaller than a €50, you'll likely need to break it down into smaller bills (at a restaurant or grocery store) to get smaller change
- Some services, like small shops and taxis, don't like breaking large bills

We suggest bringing the following:

- Debit card: Use this at ATMs to withdraw local cash, which you'll use to pay for most purchases
  - Make sure it has a Visa or MasterCard logo
  - Check with your bank what the international transaction fees are
    - Ideally, you want a flat fee per transaction/withdrawal (a few dollars, usually \$2-\$5)
  - Don't withdraw cash all the time, try to space it out so you don't pay the fee so often
  - Note: European ATMs will withdraw funds only from checking accounts
    - So make sure your checking account balance has enough or be able to transfer funds from your savings account
- Backup card: Not a bad idea to carry a backup card (debit or credit, ideally from another bank), in case your main one gets lost, demagnetized, stolen, or just doesn't work
- US dollars: As an optional backup plan, you can bring some cash (\$50 - \$100)
  - This can come in handy for emergencies or if your ATM card isn't working

You may also choose to bring:

- Credit card: Make sure the international fees are *zero*! You can use a credit card to pay for larger items (train tickets, larger shops and restaurants, etc.)
  - Don't use these with an ATM (they have sky-high withdrawal fees and interest rates)
- [E-card](#): Handy card and works for a ton of local merchants and zero ATM fees

Before you leave:

1. Know your cards
  - a. Make sure they will work abroad! Ideally, use a debit card with a Visa/MasterCard logo. (For example, Discover is unknown in Europe)
2. Ask about fees
  - a. With either credit or debit cards, you could be charged any or all of the following fees:
    - i. A currency conversion fee (usually 1–3 percent of the whole amount)
    - ii. A Visa or MasterCard international transaction fee (1 percent)

- iii. For debit cards, a flat \$2–5 transaction fee each time you use a foreign ATM
  - iv. Some major US banks partner with European banks, allowing you to use certain ATMs without fees
  - v. If you're getting a bad deal, consider getting a new debit card
- 3. Check your cards' expiration dates
  - a. If your card will expire during or soon after your trip, get a new one
- 4. Let your bank know your travel dates
  - a. Do this in writing, not verbally (**i.e. online or via your bank's app**)
  - b. Set your travel notification for the countries you'll be in and the dates you'll be abroad
  - c. Do this for weekend trips as well if you're visiting another city/country
  - d. This way, they won't freeze your card if they detect unusual activity
- 5. Know your PIN
  - a. Make sure you know the four-digit PIN for all of your cards
  - b. Request it if you don't have one (many purchases require it)
- 6. Adjust your ATM withdrawal limit
  - a. Find out how much you can take out daily
  - b. Remember that you're withdrawing cash in the local currency
  - c. So if your daily limit is \$200 in US dollars, that might be €150 or so depending on the exchange rate
  - d. Ask for a higher withdrawal limit if you want to get more cash at once
- 7. Have a back up plan
  - a. In case your main card doesn't work, what's your back up plan?

#### Tipping:

- Don't stress about tipping
- Tips are nice wherever you travel, but tipping in Europe is different
- The US tends to be more generous and automatic in tipping compared to Europe
- Restaurants
  - Waiter/waitress tips are more modest in Europe than in America
  - This is because servers in Europe are well-paid and tips are considered a small "bonus"
  - Check the menu to see if a service charge is included (servizio in Italian, service in French, servicio in Spanish)
  - If yes, don't worry about tipping (it's included in the price)
    - If no, a tip of 5–10% is normal (10% is a big tip in most places)
    - Tipping 15 or 20% in Europe is unnecessary and even culturally ignorant

- If there aren't waiters and waitresses, (aka you ordered at a pub or counter) don't tip
- Generally, it's better to hand the tip to the waiter when you pay the bill vs. leave it on the table (especially in busy places)
- Servers prefer to be tipped in cash
- France: All restaurant prices include a 12–15% service charge, so locals tip very little, if at all
- Mediterranean Europe: a 10% service charge is usually built into your bill. If you wish, you can add an extra €1–2 for each person in your party, or about 5 percent
- Spain: If you order at a counter (i.e. when sampling tapas at a bar), no need to tip but you can round up with a few small coins
- London: Restaurants commonly include a 12.5% service charge in the bill
- Scandinavia: Service charge typically included in your bill might go to the restaurant owner instead of your server, so for good service, add 5–10%
- Czech Republic: Speaking just a few Czech words will likely get you better service in the Czech Republic, and you won't be expected to tip more than a local (5-10%)
- Greece: It's considered rude to leave a single euro, even for a small total so if the service isn't included in the bill, leave at least a €2 tip, even for a small bill
- Iceland: No-tipping country!
- When in doubt, if you're pleased with the service, add a euro or two for each person in your party
- Any tip is appreciated and don't stress about leaving the 'wrong' amount of tip
- Taxis
  - Just round up to the next euro on the fare (to pay a €13 fare, give €14)
  - For a long ride, round to the nearest 10 (for a €76 fare, give €80)
  - If the driver carries your bags or helps you catch your flight, maybe add a bit more
  - If you're being driven in circles or ripped off somehow, skip the tip!
- Tour Guides
  - If you've already paid for the tour/admission, you don't have to tip extra (€1-2 euros is plenty if you want to)
  - If it's a free tour, €2–5 tip per person is good, depending on the size of the group
  - In group tours (i.e. a city walking tour), €2–5 tip per person is good, depending on the size of the group (higher rate for smaller groups)
  - For tours with a private guide for a few hours, a tip of €10–20 for the group is fine
    - You can do more if the guide goes above and beyond

- When in doubt, ask your host family (different countries tip for different things)

Informative resources for money:

- [Oanda](#) - currency conversion tool, with handy app version
- [Federal Trade Commission](#) - advice on bank card theft and more
- [NerdWallet](#) - objective advice on debit- and credit-card options for overseas trips
- [Bankrate](#) - compares bank-card fees
- Your bank's mobile app
- Locate nearby ATMs and banks (and restaurants, pharmacies, etc.) with [Google Maps](#), [Apple Maps](#), etc.
- Get [more money tips](#) from our friend, Rick Steves!

Ways to fund your adventure abroad:

1. Tell your friends! You get a \$70 discount for each friend you refer to the program who does it as well
  - a. When they apply, have them use your full name as the promo code
2. **Save** money:
  - a. Make and stick to a BUDGET
  - b. Live off 70% or less of what you bring home
  - c. Spend less on groceries (meal planning helps a TON!)
  - d. Don't buy things you don't need
  - e. Use cash, not cards
3. **Make** or raise money:
  - a. Sell your textbooks on Amazon when the semester is over
  - b. Get a job (or second job)
  - c. Send out a fundraising letter
  - d. Donate your birthday or Christmas
  - e. Use a fundraising website
  - f. Set up a car wash
  - g. Host a garage sale
  - h. Use Facebook/Instagram
  - i. Host a bake sale
  - j. Sell arts/crafts of your own making
  - k. Babysit
  - l. Tutor

## Games & Activities

*Not sure what activities to do with the kids? Here are some ideas to get started*

#### Games:

- Hide and seek
- Sardines
- I spy
- Make a crossword puzzle (keep it easy)
- Hopscotch
- Hot and cold
- Any arts and crafts
- Card games
- Concentration
- Simon says
- Hangman
- Limbo
- Hokey pokey
- Apple bobbing
- Tic-tac-toe
- Make a scavenger hunt with clues

#### Creative activities:

- Make popsicles, cookies, or other treats
- Make [play dough](#)
- Make [fake snot](#)
- Make [edible finger paint](#)
- Make your own [3-ingredient sidewalk chalk](#)
- Create a dance to their favorite song

#### Games which may require 2 or 3 more people:

- Telephone
- Duck, duck, goose
- Kick the can (and [other night games](#))
- Follow the judge
- Capture the flag
- Musical chairs
- Red rover
- Sharks and minnows
- [Ninja](#)
- Mother may I
- Red light, green light

Get to know them:

- Ask questions about them (favorite food, color, sport, animal, etc.)
- Let them teach you a skill

Tell them about yourself:

- Your country's holidays and traditions
- Your family's traditions
- Stories (family stories, your favorite books or movies, etc.)
- Jokes
- Hobbies and interests
- What your daily activities are
- Your friends, family, and/or pets
- Your future plans, etc.
- What your hometown is like and how it compares to their city

Other helpful resources:

- [Matangi Lemon](#) (DIY or [Play](#))
  - Cool ideas and sensory activities!
  - Mostly geared toward kids 5 and under, but all of the games/activities would be great for kids, especially those learning English
- [Kid Activities](#)
- [Kid Activities Blog](#)

**Note: Religious discussions or distributing printed materials about religion are prohibited.**

## Love & Logic

*How to help kids learn and grow*

- All of these tips are attributed to [The Love and Logic Institute](#)
- Love and logic is mindset of interacting with children to help them become responsible adults
- If you're Utah, these [classes are offered for FREE](#) and we highly recommend taking a class
- If you're not in Utah, we recommend reading the book, [Parenting With Love and Logic](#)
- These principles help childcare become much more fun!

Get your host parents' buy-in:

- Recognize that the children's behavioral issues may be a sensitive topic for your host parents
- Discuss concerns you have with the parents and work on possible solutions together
- Ask questions objectively
- Ask if you can share a thought or suggestion and respect their answer before making suggestions
- Present suggestions with the perspective of how it benefits the children and the parents
- Realize you won't be able to solve every behavioral issue of every child
- Remember that lasting change takes time and consistency

#### Consistency:

- Be consistent
- Be consistent
- Be consistent

#### Emotions:

- Remember: kids thrive on emotion — good or bad
- Children will do things just to get an emotional reaction
- So when kids do good things, be *emotional*! Get excited!
- When kids do bad things, or things you don't want, be *unemotional*
  - Let the consequence of the choice do the disciplining
  - Showing anger can be exciting for kids

#### Emphasize choices:

- This helps children think for themselves
- It also prevents battles
- Understand that kids throw tantrums and fight because of control — when they feel controlled, they will lash out and fight
  - This is a good thing! Any kid worth keeping has will
- Love and Logic encourages parents and caretakers to turn fighting words into "thinking words"
- Give up some of the control to the child, and they won't feel the need to lash out
- Make sure you are okay with both options
- Try to avoid phrases and direct commands like "wash your body" or "go upstairs" or "brush your teeth"
  - Example: Time to get out of the bath
    - Instead of saying "Time to get out," you can say:  
Do you want to get out now or in five minutes?
  - Example: Bedtime



- Instead of saying "Time for bed," you can say:  
Do you want to walk to your room or hop on 1 foot?
- The whole mindset is to have the kids think as much as possible
- When kids are being told what to do, they aren't thinking
  - So they only have room for *rebellling* or becoming *robots*
- Ask them questions and give them options as often as possible
  - This helps kids not only feel in control, but it also helps them think so they can make better decisions later in life

#### Logical consequences:

- Make logical consequences the result of misbehavior
- Let the consequence be the teacher
- One of the main ideas Love and Logic is to let kids make lots of little mistakes early
  - These little mistakes won't have huge consequences but the kids can learn from them and learn to make better decisions in the future
- Example: Teeth brushing
  - If a child chooses not to brush their teeth, you could let them choose so. You might say, "I let kids who brush their teeth eat sweets." Or some other logical consequence. Then the next day, if they haven't brushed their teeth the night before, eat a treat in front of them or only give them to the kids who brushed. It will probably trigger a tantrum, but then they will remember when it comes to teeth brushing time. And they will know the logical consequence of brushing their teeth.
- Tantrums for Toddlers ([The "Uh-Oh Song" by Love and Logic](#)):
  - When a child starts throwing a tantrum, calmly tell him or her "I'm happy to talk to you when your voice is as calm as mine is." If he or she continues to scream, half-sing "uh oh. Looks like you need a little time in your room." Then ask him or her, "Do you want to walk to your room or do you want me to carry you?" If they continue to scream or don't walk to their room, you can say, "It looks like you chose carry."
  - When you get to the room, give more choices: "Do you want the light on or off?" "Do you want to be in your room with the door open or shut?" If the child chooses open and then runs out, you can say, "It looks like you chose shut." Then shut the door and stay close. But don't say anything to the child until they're calm. Once he or she has calmed down and isn't screaming, tell him or her you'll set the timer for 4-5 minutes and they can choose to come out when it goes off. This consequence makes sense because in real life, if you scream and throw tantrums, people aren't going to want to be around you.

- It's best to discuss consequences with your host mom to be on the same page

Other principles:

- It's never too late and it's never too early to start using these principles
- If you can't change the behavior, change the location
- When kids do good things, get emotional!
- When kids do bad things or things you don't like, be unemotional
- Be slow to lecture
- Talk with your host parents, you're on the same team

## Phones & Electronics

*Phone service and how to charge your devices*

Security

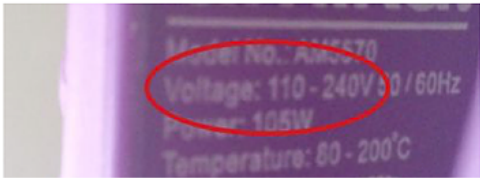


- If you don't have a key code on your phone, set one up

Adapters vs. converters:

- Did you know different countries have different outlets?
- Adaptor: changes the plug shape
- Converter: changes the plug shape *and* converts the volts as well
- America supplies electricity at about **110 volts AC**
- Most other countries usually supply electric power between **220 and 240 volts AC**
  - So if you have an American appliance built for only 110 V, you'll need a **CONVERTER**
  - If your appliance can handle anything between 110 and 240 V, all you need is an **ADAPTER**
- You can find converters and adapters linked on our [shop page](#) (or on Amazon, at Target, or other similar stores).

So which one do you need?

- Check your appliance before you go
- Common appliances (like phone chargers and laptop chargers) usually only need an adapter
- Look for V or voltage on your appliance
  - If it says Voltage: 110 - 240V, all you need is an **adapter**
  - If it says Voltage: 110V, you need a **converter**

		
This appliance only needs an adapter	Adapter (U.S. > Europe)	Converter (U.S. > Europe)

Cell phone coverage: International plan vs. SIM card

- You need to choose one of these so you can make calls in case of emergency
- Usually, it's simpler and cheaper to get a SIM card for phone service abroad
- Some plans have affordable international service
  - For example, T-mobile has international coverage — however, bear in mind that the data is usually very slow (which isn't fun when you're out and about)
- Our recommendation: **SIM card with data**

How to get a SIM card

1. Before you go, your phone needs to be unlocked
2. Call or visit your cell phone provider before you go and see if your specific phone is unlocked
  - If it is already unlocked, great!
  - If not, ask them to unlock it for you
  - If you can't unlock your phone for some reason, you can buy an unlocked phone (around \$40 for a basic one) or an inexpensive mobile phone that already has a SIM card (as little as \$20) once you get there
3. After you arrive, ask your host family where you can buy a SIM card (or some host families provide one)
4. Buy a SIM card
  - SIM cards are sold all over the place
  - You'll probably need to show some form of ID (usually a copy of your passport will work fine)
  - Cost in Europe:
    - Basic SIM - about \$5-10 (usually includes some prepaid calling credit)
    - With data - about \$15-30 for SIM + some data (varies on data amount)
5. Have the clerk set it up and do a test call to make sure everything is working the way it should
6. When you run out of data/minutes, you can buy more online
7. Save important contacts

- When you do this, save them to your phone rather than the SIM card
- Otherwise, you'll lose access to them when you switch SIMs
- Also, be sure to include the country code and the plus sign to make sure that your calls will go through

Suggested apps before you leave and during your stay

- [Duolingo](#)
  - Practice your Italian and learn basic phrases before you go!
- [Rick Steve's Audio Europe](#)
  - Tons of free, super helpful and fun walking tours
  - Download the tours while you have WiFi, then listen when you're out and about
  - Listen to relevant topics before you go to a place and it can really help you make the most of your trip
- [Google Translate](#)
  - This is sooo helpful when you're trying to communicate!
- [Airbnb](#)
  - In our opinion, it's the best way to book accommodations for traveling on the weekend — you can read more details in [this section](#)
- [FlixBus](#)
  - If you're trying to save money or can't find a good train time, FlixBus has affordable buses
- [Google Maps](#)
  - Really helpful for finding routes, reading reviews, and exploring by foot
- [Rome 2 Rio](#)
  - We love this app for figuring out how to get from A to B. Book directly with the mode of transportation you choose, but it's helpful to see all the options.
- Apps for booking trains
  - [Rail Europe](#)
  - [TrenItalia](#)
  - [Italo Treno](#)

Be where you are: A word about phones!

- It's great to have connection with your friends and family back home
- It's just as important to "be where you are"
- The main reason you're there is so that you can interact with the kids and help them
- Make it a goal to truly focus on the children when you're with them
- Your host parents are the only people you should text/call while you're "on duty"
- Leave your phone in your room (or in a bag when you're out) while you're "on duty" OR turn your phone to airplane mode while you are "on duty"

- If you need to, turn off certain app notifications while you're "on duty"

## Packing, Weather, & Airport Etiquette

### *What to bring and airport tips*

#### Weather:

- Italy is humid — prepare accordingly
- Milan:
  - Spring - temperatures range from 50 - 66 F
  - Summer - temperatures range from 73 - 77 F
  - Fall - temperatures range from 48 - 68 F
  - Winter - temperatures range from 37 - 39 F
- Rome:
  - Spring - temperatures range from 54 - 70 F
  - Summer - temperatures range from 73 - 75 F
  - Fall - temperatures range from 55 - 72 F
  - Winter - temperatures range from 46 - 55 F

#### Packing tips:

- Most Italians hang dry their laundry so keep that in mind when packing clothes, consider clothes that don't have to be washed frequently
- Have clothes that mix and match well
- ROLL your clothes! This allows you to fit more into a small suitcase
- Keep one set of clothes and underclothes and toothbrush and toothpaste in your carry-on bag (you will thank us on your layovers!)
- Keep clothes that wrinkle easily on the top
- Wear your heaviest clothing
- Keep in mind to wear shoes/jackets/belt that are easy to take off for airport security
- Don't wear a lot of jewelry or have a lot of change in your pockets for airport days
- Weigh all your luggage prior to departure
- Remember that Italy may not have a few things you take for granted at home. Some things difficult to find are:
  - Peanut butter — Some rare stores have it, local stores don't sell it
    - But it's okay because European Nutella is better than the American version!
  - Tampons — Europe does have tampons but the ones with plastic applicators are very hard to find and/or very expensive (they do have tampons but there is no applicator)

What to pack (check out our [printable version!](#)):

- Bags:
  - Side bag with a strap which goes around you like [this one](#) / or a fanny pack
  - [Money belt](#)
  - Tote or backpack
  - Wallet\*
  - [Packing cubes](#) (these ones come with 2 laundry bags too!)
- Clothing:
  - 8+ shirts, some casual and 2 to 3 nice ones for going out
  - 3-4 pants
  - Pajamas
  - 10+ socks
  - 8+ underwear
  - 1-2 jackets
  - Dresses/skirts/suit jacket or nicer clothes for fancier outings
  - Swimsuit (and cover-up)
  - Workout clothes
  - Rain jacket
  - Warmer jacket
  - 1 pair tennis shoes (for hikes, long walking days, etc.)
  - 1 pair nice shoes (for dinners and going out)
  - Comfortable sandals (if going May - September)
- Accessories:
  - 1 scarf (if going in cold weather, but keep in mind you can buy one there too!)
  - Hat
  - Jewelry
  - Hair accessories
  - Belt
- Toiletries:
  - Glasses/contacts
  - Toothbrush & toothpaste\*
  - [Travel-sized hand sanitizer](#)\*
  - Tampons or silicone cup (this [Flex Cup](#) has good reviews)
  - Deodorant\*
  - Hairbrush\*
  - Nail clippers
  - Dry shampoo\*
  - [Shampoo bar](#)

- Note: you can tuck these into the corners of the suitcase, or inside shoes and wrap them in plastic so nothing gets ruined if they spill
- You can also find many of these at local pharmacies
- Medicine:
  - Prescriptions
  - Vitamins
  - Tylenol/Ibuprofen
- Electronics/Entertainment:
  - [Regular earphones](#)\* (even if you have an iPhone, you may want these for the plane ride)
  - [iPhone earphones](#)\*
  - Book or [Kindle](#)\*
    - Or just download some good ones on the [Kindle app](#)!
    - Many local libraries have whole English sections which are very fun and interesting
  - Laptop\*
  - Camera
  - Phone/camera/laptop chargers\*
  - [Adaptors/converters](#)
  - Journal\*
  - Pens\*
- For weekend travel (especially if you're going to hostels):
  - Travel towel like [this one](#)
  - [Padlock](#) for hostel lockers
  - [Small bottles](#) or bags for toiletries
- Documents
  - Passport\*
  - 2 Black and white copies of your passport
  - Proof of COVID vaccination\*
  - Drivers license (and international permit if necessary)
- Other:
  - [Water bottle](#)\*
  - [Travel pillow](#)\*
  - Gift for host family

\*These items come handy in the plane or airport. So pack these in your personal item (or carry-on bag for larger items). Add in a change of clothes as well. You'll be glad you can freshen up if flights get delayed!

#### Recommended luggage:

- **You get a gold star if you only pack 1 carry on + 1 personal item!**
- Ideally, you should take 1 rolling check in bag (max weight of 50 lbs) and 1 personal item (small backpack or purse)
- Some Travelers check a bag
- You could also roll a duffel bag in your carry on bag and check it on the way home so you can bring home lots of stuff!
- Your luggage requirements may be different if you fly with a European airline
- So always check your specific airline's baggage limits

#### Gifts for the family:

- It's polite and customary to bring a gift for your host parents, the child(ren), and anyone else living in the home
- See our [shop page](#) for product links and ideas
  - \*Note: When you click the links on our shop page, we may receive a commission at no extra cost to you
- Possible gift ideas for kids:
  - Chalk
  - [Face cards](#)
  - Other small games like [Spot It](#)
  - A few easy-to-read books
  - Cinnamon gum (it doesn't exist in Europe)
  - Ingredients for a favorite recipe you can make with them
- Possible gift ideas for parents/grandparents:
  - A coffee table [book](#) of your state/America
  - A nice painting or picture
  - Maple syrup extract (generally, Europeans love syrup!)
  - Something they can't get in Italy
  - Something local from your hometown

#### Airport etiquette:

- Be prepared! Have your itinerary, passport, ID, and wallet in a place easy to access
- Be on time! Arrive at least 2 hours early to the airport for international flights
- If you have carry-on luggage, pack lightly and compactly
- Weigh all your luggage prior to arrival
- Wait in single file and have all documents ready before it's your turn
- Respect personal space and be aware of your luggage and feet
- Be the composed person in line ready to help someone if they need it, rather than the person who is disorganized



- Wait patiently
- If you see a senior citizen, disabled person, or pregnant woman always offer them a chair before you sit down
- Listen and follow instructions and speak kindly to others
- Keep your belongings to a minimum
- When going to the restroom, carry your belongings with you into the toilet
- Wash your hands
- Remember that you represent both America and Rome Abroad
- Be mindful of people around you and where their hands and eyes are
- Speak kindly and use the words "Please" and "Thank-you"
- Don't be scared to ask for help — if you need help, ask airport personnel, especially at a help desk
- If you do miss your flight, or it gets cancelled, talk to someone in an airports uniform or someone at the closest help desk to get the latest information so that you can adjust your plans and let your host family/Rome Abroad know about the delay
- Hydrate yourself with water regularly during the flight and take a walk every couple of hours
- If you don't have a key code on your phone, set one up
- Carry only the cash you need; we suggest using an ATM (see the [Money](#) section)
- DON'T flash cash and be inconspicuous about where and how much money you are carrying

## Transportation

### *Planes, trains, and automobiles*

#### Trains:

- They're a fantastic way to get around in Italy
- Italian trains are affordable, comfortable, convenient, they run on time, and provide a wonderful view of the Italian countryside
- Use these sites (or apps) to plan trips and get tickets
  - [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)
  - [www.italiarail.com](http://www.italiarail.com)
  - [www.italotreno.it/en](http://www.italotreno.it/en)
- You may want to use the Trenitalia app
  - [iPhones](#)
  - [Androids](#)
- Or you can buy them in person (use a kiosk whenever possible — it's way faster!)

- Only wait in line if you absolutely have to do so
- **REMEMBER to stamp your ticket BEFORE you board the train at one of the yellow boxes, otherwise you will get a huge fine** (a staff member will check tickets for validation during the train ride)
- You can travel on a sleeper train to save on accommodation and arrive first thing in the morning
- Other basic train travel tips:
  - Don't wait to board your train until the last minute
  - Be prepared to send your bags through a security scanner
  - Keep your ticket handy
  - Ask staff member to tell you when your station is coming up

#### Buses:

- Buses are another great way to get around town
- If you're lucky and going in the off-season (September - May), they shouldn't be too crowded
- Be aware that around rush hour (5-6 pm), they can get quite busy

#### Walking:

- Italians (and Europeans in general) walk everywhere!
- Bring good walking shoes!
- It's a wonderful way to get around and get a feel for your city and Italy in general

#### Other transportation tips

- [Rome 2 Rio](#) — You may use this website for best ways to get from A to B, but be sure to double-check the bus and train schedules before you plan
  - It's a good way to see multiple methods of travel and compare cost, times, etc.
- Google maps is accurate and helpful
- A word about strikes...
  - Strikes may happen
  - And often
  - Note that strikes are usually announced beforehand
  - Sometimes drivers will still operate through the strike

## Religions

### *Proper behavior for places of worship*

### Demographics of religions in Italy:

- The major religion in Italy is Christianity, specifically the [Catholic Church](#)

#### General etiquette for visiting places of worship:

- Many of the best sights are cathedrals, basilicas, or other edifices considered holy
- Remember that many of these sacred sites are also living quarters for monks and nuns
- Be aware and considerate of those who are praying or worshipping
- Speak quietly
- Your phone should be switched to silent upon entering any grounds of worship
- Don't use your phone (texting or talking)
- Don't point with your fingers or touch statues
- Don't have inappropriate conversations
- Don't chew gum
- Don't walk in front of others praying
- Don't walk across or in front of statues or other holy items
- Don't eat (have your picnic elsewhere!)
- Many cathedrals don't allow flash photography and some don't allow any type of pictures or videos
  - Look around for signs and directions before
  - Always ask a guard or official before you take pictures

#### Proper dress:

- Dress to visit a cathedral can be casual
- Always remove your hat when entering a cathedral
- For both genders, don't wear revealing clothing. You should cover your:
  - Shoulders
  - Legs above the knee
  - Stomach/midriff

#### Worship etiquette:

- You may pray or worship at sacred sites
- Be genuine and never mock
- Lighting candles
  - Typically worshippers light them when entering the cathedral
  - Worshippers light them as they pray, making an offering to accompany their prayers
  - There are certain times, when candles should not be lit (usually during the service); ask a church usher if in doubt
- Venerating (kissing) icons
  - It is traditional for worshipers to venerate (kiss) the icons located in the narthex

- You don't have to do this
- If you do venerate an icon, remember it is improper to kiss an icon on the face
- You should blot any lipstick beforehand
- During a service
  - Dress appropriately
    - For men: wear a suit and tie or a sports jackets and slacks with a tie
    - For women: Have your shoulders covered, and dresses/skirts should be knee length or longer
  - Arrive at the church before the service starts
  - During the service, there are some moments when no one should be moving around
  - One basic rule: whenever the priest faces the people or is outside the altar on the solea, either censing or blessing, everyone should stand wherever they are
  - Refrain from chewing gum or using a cell phone/camera during a service
  - Refrain from slouching or crossing your legs
  - If you choose to receive the Holy Communion, you should eat it carefully so no crumbs fall
  - Don't leave the church before dismissal

## Check In

### *How to stay in touch*

Why do we have the check in?

- Helps Rome Abroad verify everything is going well
- It's part of the program and is included in contract/agreement you sign

What's in the check in?

- Here's the link: [bit.ly/romeabroad-checkin](https://bit.ly/romeabroad-checkin)
  - You report on pay, food, and hours
  - This helps us ensure you're treated fairly
  - You'll upload a picture
  - You'll confirm that you've made your social media post for that week
    - This means you've posted a picture on Instagram tagging Rome Abroad with the Facebook option turned on

Social media posts:

- Each week, you'll make 1 (more is fine) post on Instagram

- Tag Rome Abroad in the photo/video (in the caption is fine too, but make sure to tag the photo/video)
- Have the Facebook option turned on
- Those staying longer than 3 months can do the social media posts every other week as soon as they hit 3 months

#### Deadline:

- Monday at midnight of your city's time zone
- We'll send out a text reminder to the group
- It's okay if you do it before then, just make sure it's at least once per week before each Monday at midnight
- If you have any issues at all in these terms, let Rome Abroad's Managing Director know *before you leave* (we will work with you!)

#### Blog post / vlog post:

- Once during your stay, you can choose between a blog and a vlog post
  - Blog post = 1 page (about 800 words)
    - We'll work together on the topic — some ideas could be “10 Packing Tips for Italy,” “What I Learned in 3 months in Europe,” “The 5 Unsung Best Cities of Italia,” etc.
  - Vlog = 4 minutes of video
    - We'll work together on the content — some ideas could be “A Day in My Life in Italy,” “What I Learned in 3 months in Italy,” “The Biggest Surprises About Living an Italian Life,” etc.
- This helps other people understand what the program is like
- It's a good way to reflect on your growth
- Parents can read about what you've learned
- You'll submit it here: <https://bit.ly/RA-blogvlog>

#### Benefits:

- By completing all of the required weekly check ins, you ensure you're on track to receive:
  - Full support in case we need to intervene or help your family comply with terms
  - Your Certificate of Completion (can be added to LinkedIn and you can add it to your resume as well)
  - Professional Reference — Rome Abroad will be willing to be listed as a reference for future employment opportunities or other endeavors
  - Letter of Recommendation — Available upon request for future employment opportunities or other endeavors

Notes:

- Be proactive and responsible — complete it without being reminded :)
- By not completing these requirements, you forfeit the benefits listed above
- By skipping it or forgetting, you are communicating that you need to be micromanaged

## Legalities

### *Laws and what to say at customs*

General Guidelines:

- Be calm, composed, and pay attention
- Wait in line patiently and follow any signs or directions
- Phones are not allowed to be used, so keep it tucked away
- Talking is generally not permitted either
- When it's your turn, an official might ask you "What is the purpose of your stay?"
  - Your answer: Travel around Italy or experience Italy's culture
    - OR Learn Italian and experience Italy's culture (if you have a student visa)
  - Legally, you are a tourist (or student, in some rare cases)
  - If you respond with an answer like, "I'm working," or "I'm going to be an au pair!" they will ask you for your working visa (which you don't have)
    - When you don't have it, they'll ask you to turn around and go home
    - Technically you are a Rome Abroad "Traveler," so it's the truth :)
  - If they ask about where you are staying, you can say honestly with friends

**Note: As a tourist you are not allowed to stay in the Schengen Zone for longer than 90 days within a 180-day period. Do not overstay your limit of 90 days.**

YES

- You are a tourist (OR student in some rare cases)
- You want to experience the culture and travel
- You are staying with friends (if they ask)

NO

- You are NOT an au pair
- You are NOT working
- If you are on a tourist visa, DO NOT stay in the Schengen Zone longer than 90 days within a 180-day period

## Holidays

*It's time to celebrate...and Italians know how*

### Holidays

- There are nationwide holidays and city holidays
- Each city has its own Saint's day and it's a big deal
- Some examples:
  - Pisa — [St. Ranieri](#)  
[Luminara](#) celebrated June 16  
The whole city is filled with lighted candles and there's a firework show on the River Arno
  - Rome — St. Peter & St. Paul  
[La Festa di San Pietro e Paolo](#) celebrated June 29  
“Floral carpets,” are displayed outside St. Peter's Square and there are fireworks at night
  - All over Italy - [Carnivale](#)  
Carnivale celebrated (especially on Fat Tuesday) before Lent begins  
Huge winter festival (two weeks) complete with masks, parades, music and parties
  - Venice - The Redeemer  
[Festa del Redentore](#) celebrated July 15-16  
Firework display in St. Mark's Square
- Keep in mind:
  - Italy has quite a few holidays
  - Holidays can strike without warning
  - Festival dates are often not posted on websites until just before the event
    - They may be even be posted incorrectly

**Note:** Check out [Italy's official tour site](#) or [Rick Steves](#) for more info about Italian holidays — and get updates on local events with [Whazzo](#), a free app

## Airbnb Guide

*How to find weekend getaway places and save big time*

First off, here are a few reasons why we LOVE Airbnb:

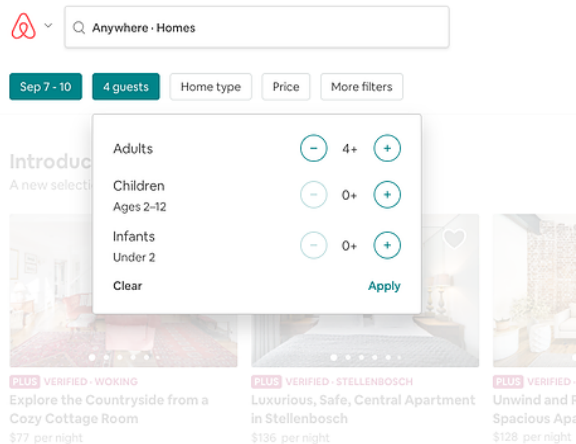
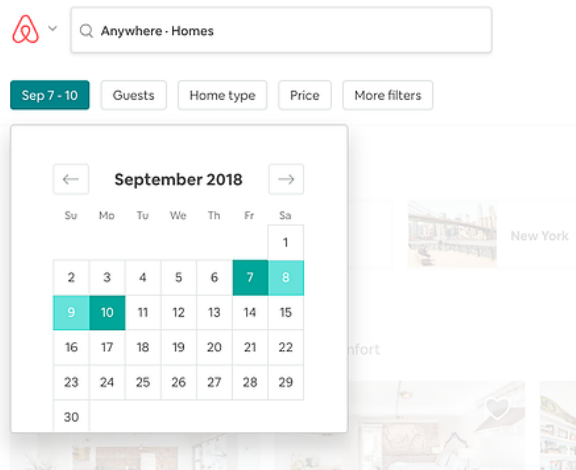
1. It's affordable.  
Because you can search and filter by your budget, Airbnb makes finding an affordable place to stay easy. Also, it's not like a hostel because I always feel really cramped in those. You can have the advantage of staying in an affordable place without feeling like a sardine.
2. The connections.  
You get to meet locals and other travelers in a much more comfortable way. Seriously, I can't describe the number of interesting and helpful conversations we had with locals when we stayed at their homes.
3. It helps out the locals.  
Another added bonus is that the money is going straight to the local economy so you're helping individuals and families just like you! Rather than contributing to a giant, insatiable hotel firm.
4. Cozy, comfortable insight to the culture > Characterless hotel.  
Staying at a local residence rather than a hotel really does help you feel at home in the country. You're not just a passing-by tourist who scratches the surface by staying in a room with a bed and questionable sheets. Staying at a local's place gives you a cozy, at-home feel that's hard to find elsewhere. Plus, the people around you, the neighborhoods you walk through — they're all real. Not some calculated real estate.
5. Save money by eating in.  
You can save money by eating some meals at home. 'Nuff said. Don't get me wrong, I am ALL for trying delicious local foods. But every single meal can add up and it's nice to have some food at home a night or two.

That being said, using Airbnb is easy and awesome. Here are the basic steps to starting:

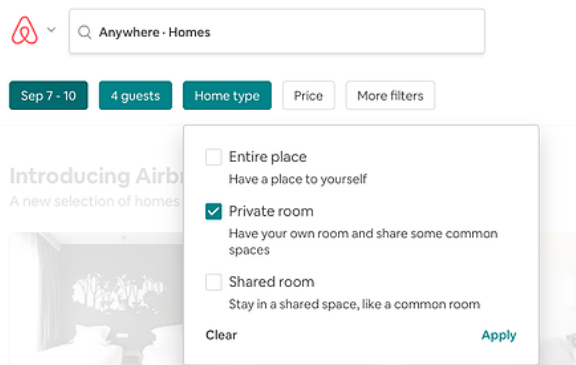
1. Create an account. Go to [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) (using our link gets you up to \$55 credit!)
  - a. You can sign in with Facebook, Google, or email account
  - b. Be sure to verify your government ID, add personal info and a picture, and let your personality come through!
2. Once all your information is confirmed, search for a city and click Homes (our example is "Anywhere").



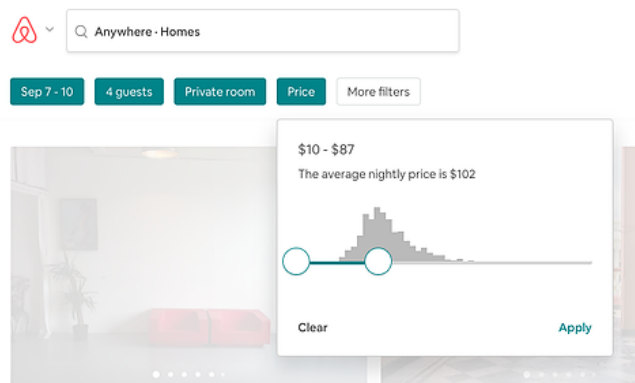
3. Add more filters to find listings that match your dates and number of guests.



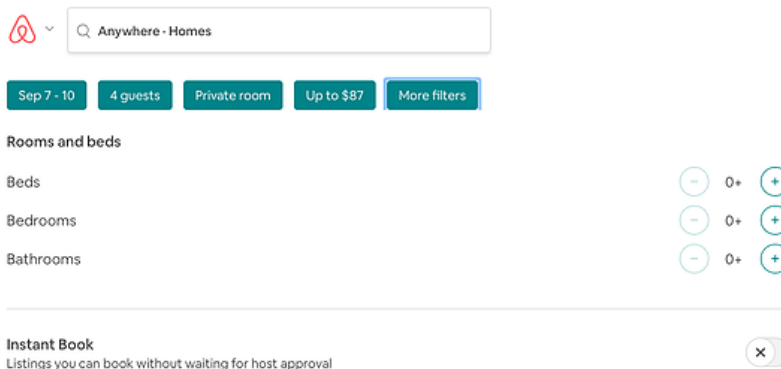
4. Next, filter the home type and price. If things are looking expensive, a great way to go is by booking a private room rather than an entire place. These private rooms usually have a lock (check the listing) and it's also a great way to meet more people staying in the



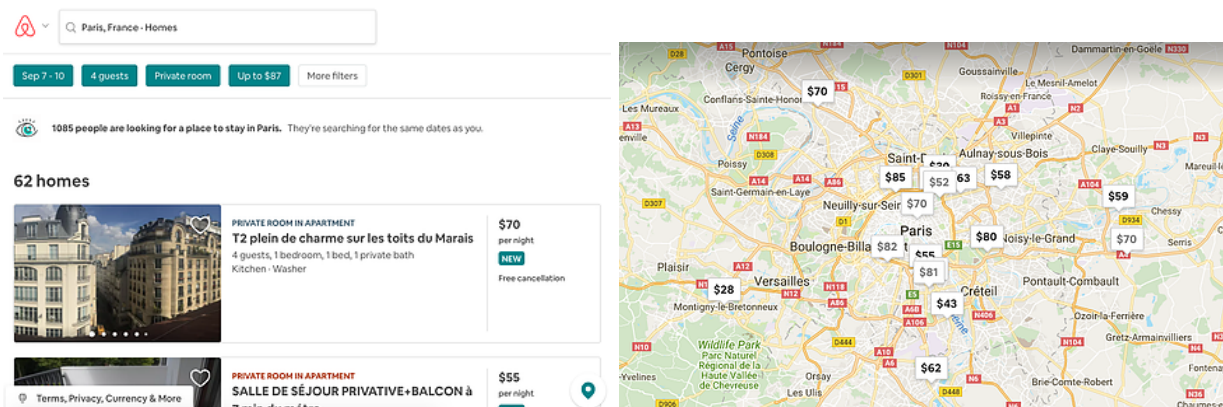
place.



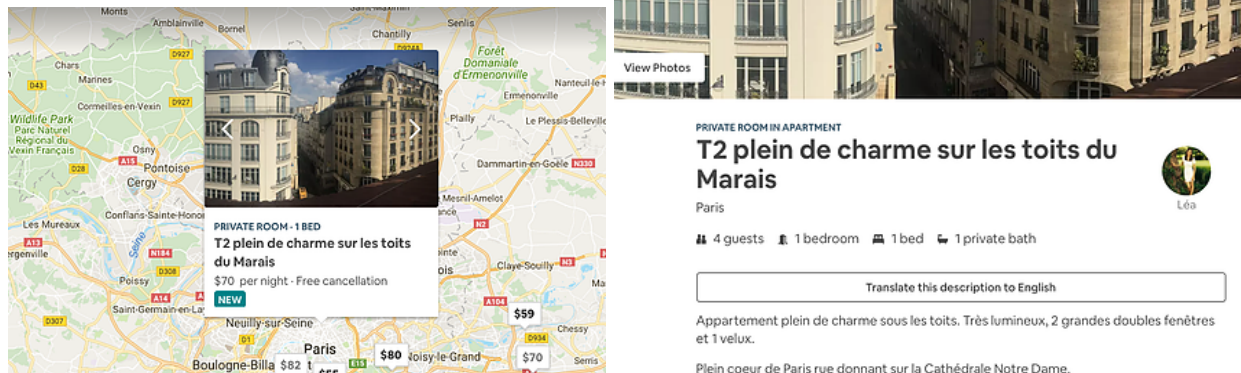
5. Additionally, you can also filter by other factors such as number of beds/bathrooms. Like the other filter choices, these are optional.



6. Your results will show as a list. One helpful way to find results is to click the map icon at the bottom right. This shows you the area where the listings are located. (Are they close to the train station or one of the sights you want to see?)



7. From the map view, you can also look at the photos of a listing, or pull up the full listing in a new tab. If the listing is listed in another language, you can click "Translate" and you'll get the description in English.



8. You can also see details of the amenities, sleeping arrangements, and read more about the neighborhood.

#### Amenities

- Air conditioning
- Kitchen
- Breakfast
- Dryer
- Laptop friendly workspace
- Iron

[Show all 19 amenities](#)

#### Sleeping arrangements



**Bedroom 1**  
1 double bed



**Common spaces**  
1 floor mattress

## The neighborhood

**Features** · shopping center · touristic · bistros · museums · restaurants · crowded

Léa's home is located in Paris, Île-de-France, France.

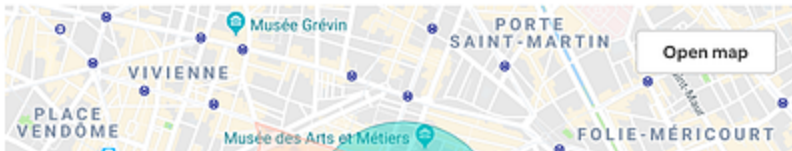
In the heart of the Marais, historic district of central Paris.

An abundance of restaurants, bars, museums and small shops!

Pedestrian street and bike paths.

[Read more about the neighborhood](#) ▾

### Things to do in Paris



9. Click “book” and you're done! You'll get a chance to review the details and message your host. If you're traveling with others, Airbnb gives you an option to split the cost right away (it sends invoices via email to your travel pals). For some bookings, you may need to wait to be approved. Either way, you'll get an email confirmation once it's officially booked. Happy travels!

A screenshot of an Airbnb booking summary modal. The modal displays the following information:

- \$70** per night
- Dates:** 09/07/2018 → 09/10/2018
- Guests:** 4 guests (with a dropdown arrow)
- Summary:**

\$70 x 3 nights	\$210
Service fee <sup>?</sup>	\$28
Occupancy taxes and fees <sup>?</sup>	\$12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$250</b>
- Book** (red button)
- You won't be charged yet

## Where to Go

*You have free time...where should you go?*

### Plan Out Your Trip:

- Check out metro/train/bus times before you plan to go
- Note: This list is in order of what we consider must-sees, then should-sees, then nice-to-sees
- Consider seeing two places in the same weekend — for example, you can stop in Pisa to see the Leaning Tower on your way to Cinque Terre. And you can see the beautiful coastal city of Sorrento on your weekend to Pompeii.

### 1. Rome

- From its significant role in history to its beautiful arts, Rome is breathtaking
- Best things to see/do:
  - The Colosseum
  - The Pantheon
  - St. Peter's Basilica (don't miss the rooftop view!)
  - Trevi Fountain
  - The Spanish Steps
  - Piazza Navona and Fountain of the Four Rivers
  - The Vatican Museums (including the Sistine Chapel)

### 2. Venice

- We've all heard how amazing Venice is...but it REALLY is
- Best things to see/do:
  - Walk around the streets
  - St. Mark's Square
  - Cathedral
  - Burano Island (check out the glass blowing too!)
  - Gondola ride (totally worth it!)

### 3. Florence

- One of the gems of Tuscany, definitely go there!
- Best things to see/do:
  - If you love art...
    - Michelangelo's David and more in the [Galleria Dell'Accademia](#)
    - [Uffizi Gallery](#) (get there early! and buy your ticket beforehand)
  - Palazzo Vecchio
  - Piazza della Signoria and Loggia dei Lanzi
  - Il Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge)

### 4. Cinque Terre

- Aka the Five Lands, or five small villages on the coast of Italy
- UNESCO World Heritage Site (this means it's worth your time!)
- Best things to see/do:
  - Hike between the villages
  - We recommend stopping for lunch in Vernazza!

#### 5. Pisa (same day/weekend as Cinque Terre)

- Quaint town in Tuscany, worth an hour of your time -- and that's all you really need
- Best things to see/do:
  - The famous Leaning Tower (climb to the top for a handful of euros)
  - Walk along the beautiful streets and the River Arno
  - People watch, take some strolls around town
  - Check out the old city walls, they're beautiful!

#### 6. Amalfi Coast

- World-famous place for a reason!
- Best things to see/do:
  - Enjoy the sun and beach too
  - Relax
  - Work on your tan
  - Get gelato
  - Take nice pictures at the beach
  - Hop over to Positano while you're there!

#### 7. Pompeii

- See what life was like hundreds of years ago by walking through the ancient ruins!
- Preserved by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius, this ancient city isn't "beautiful," but it is interesting to look around!
- Best things to see/do:
  - Walk around listening to Rick Steve's free audio tour of the city

#### 8. Sorrento

- Another great place down in the south of Italy...words are superfluous when trying to describe the serenity and beauty of this place. Just check it out!
- Best things to see/do:
  - Walk around listening
  - Look at the coast
  - Drink lemonade

## 9. Siena

- Located in Tuscany, the historic city center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Beautiful buildings, museums, and great food
- Best things to see/do:
  - Watch Palio, the famous horse race in July
  - Walk around the city
  - Check out some local cathedrals

## Great Resources

- [Rick Steves](#) — He has some great resources like free audio tours and other tips for exploring Italy!
- [Italian Tourism Official Website](#) - Places to see, things to do, etc.

## Issues

### *How to deal with challenges*

#### Smaller issues (easily solvable):

- For these types of issues, let us know about the problem *right away*
- For example, if you are paid on Tuesdays and it's Wednesday but you haven't been paid yet, tell us right away
- Another example could be not having a set schedule or not sticking to the schedule in the contract/agreement
  - We will either politely remind your host family to take care of it or
  - Help coach you in how to bring it up
  - Either way: we'll make a plan together
- If any issues like this persist, we can have a mediation session to talk about the issue
- If a mediation session doesn't fix it, we can work out other options
- If you're not sure if something is an issue, refer to the contract/agreement
  - If it's breaking the contract/agreement, let us know about the problem right away
- If it's not in the contract/agreement, but you're uncomfortable anyway, just talk to Rome Abroad's Managing Director and we will figure it out together

#### Large issues:

- For these types of issues, let us know about the problem right away
  - For example, any attempts of illegal activity, inappropriate behavior, or abuse

- We will get you to a safe place (see the emergency hostels list we emailed you) and get you with a new host family as soon as possible

Be open to constructive feedback:

- Recognize that problems are rarely 100% the fault of one party
- Ask yourself "what could I be doing better?"
- Ask your host mom what you can do to improve and make some personal goals accordingly

Before you terminate the program:

- If you decide to end your program before your intended departure date, there are some consequences
- Understand these consequences before you make a decision
- Consequences for quitting the program early are explained in your signed agreement and our [Terms and Conditions](#) which you agreed to upon applying to the program
- These consequences may include:
  - Cancellation fees (\$150 per week canceled)
  - Loss of Certificate of Completion
  - Loss of future reference and letter of recommendation
  - The need to provide a doctor's note (if you are going home for health reasons)

Resources:

- [Rome Abroad's Terms and Conditions](#)
- Your individual agreement (check your email or request another copy if you can't find it)
- [Rome Abroad's Cancellation Form](#)

**OPTIONAL LESSONS:** Only read/use these next two sections if you are staying longer than 90 days or if you need to drive in Italy.

## OPTIONAL: Visa Instructions

*How to apply for a visa*

Basic visa info:

- American citizens need a visa to stay in the [Schengen Zone](#) (the blue countries in the image) for longer than 90 days in a 180-day period
  - If you exceed 90 days in the Schengen illegally, you may have serious consequences (a fine, deportation, and/or ban) so don't do this





- Having a student visa is the best way to stay in the Schengen for longer than 90 days
- In order to qualify for the student visa, you'll attend an Italian language course for usually about 20 hours per week
- You need to have the student visa valid for your entire stay in the Schengen area
- Double check all this info online for the country you're applying to

#### Student visa costs:

- The student visa costs about \$60 (slightly more or less depending on exchange rates)
- Tuition cost varies based on how many months you plan to stay
  - You'll also need to pay at least 50% of tuition (percentage depends on the host family)
  - You'll pay this to the school nearest your host family (we work with a couple schools to get you a good deal)
  - Total tuition in Milan is about €250/month
  - Total tuition in Rome ranges from €136 to €250/month
    - The host families are usually happy to pay half of this cost
- You'll need \$1000 in your bank for each month you plan to have the student visa for OR someone who can vouch for you for this amount

#### Other visa considerations:

- The visas are issued in about 30 days
- You will send out your visa application by mail with your passport
- You will receive your passport back and your visa by mail
- Your passport must be valid at least 3-6 months beyond the date of your return to the U.S. and must have at least 2 blank pages. It also must have been issued within the last 10 years
- After you arrive in Italy, you'll need to apply for a "permesso di soggiorno" (residency permit) from the local Questura (police department) within 8 days of your arrival in Italy
  - You might not be able to travel to other countries until you get this permit

**Note: When asked by the consulate or at customs or in the airport, remember you are NOT working nor being paid — you are a student who is being hosted by an Italian family while you attend Italian classes**

#### Instructions for applying for the student visa:

1. Fill out all the paperwork you can (we've uploaded all the forms into a [folder](#))
  - a. Start with school application
  - b. Then visa application
2. Get an official statement from your bank
3. Print a transcript or other proof that you've taken basic Italian courses

4. Gather all documents
5. Coordinate with host to have them send the invitation letter ASAP
6. Pay tuition
7. Call the Italian Consulate to make an appointment
  - a. TALK TO ROME ABROAD'S MANAGING DIRECTOR BEFORE YOU CALL
  - b. You will need to know exactly what to say so you need to rehearse this before you call the Consulate to make an appointment. You are NOT an au pair, you are not working. You are studying abroad with a host family arranged by the school and you have paid rent (technically your program fee).
  - c. Call 3 weeks before you need to meet with them
  - d. They will only meet with you if you have completed the application and all required documentation
  - e. [Salt Lake City Consulate](#)
    - i. 801-532-7300
    - ii. [italianconsul@sautah.com](mailto:italianconsul@sautah.com)
    - iii. Hours: Tuesday, 9 am - 11 am and Thursday, 2 pm - 4 pm
8. After the Consulate gives you approval, you'll mail all the documents to the Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco
  - a. You'll receive the visa via mail
  - b. You'll show the visa with your passport upon entering and leaving Italy

#### Remember!

- Mail or submit all required documents in a timely manner
- If you fail to do so, it may result in delayed visa approval or refusal by the Consulate
- The Consulate has the final decision on issuing a visa
- They might ask for further documents
- Mail your package of documents with a secured and trackable service such as FedEx, UPS, USPS Express, or DHL

**Note: The sooner you gather this paperwork, the easier it will be to apply for a visa!**

## OPTIONAL: International Driving Permit

### *How to drive legally & internationally*

If your host family requires some driving:

- You need to get an International Driving Permit (IDP) before you go
- Double check all this [info online](#)
- Your host will generally reimburse you for this

- If not, Rome Abroad will

#### About the IDP:

- Valid in 150+ countries (including Italy, France, Spain, China, and Australia)
- Contains your name, photo, and driver information translated into ten languages
- Can be used as a form of identification as well

#### What you need:

- Completed [International Driving Permit \(IDP\) Application](#)
- Two ORIGINAL passport-type photos each signed on the back
- \$20 USD permit fee
  - Rome Abroad will reimburse you for this (if the host family doesn't)
  - Take a photo of your receipt and email it to [info@romeabroad.com](mailto:info@romeabroad.com)
- Acceptable forms of payment are U.S. bank checks, or money orders payable to AAA
  - Also these major credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover Card
- If mailing: a photocopy of both sides of your driver's license

#### How to apply for the IDP:

- EITHER bring your valid U.S. driver's license, \$20 USD, and two ORIGINAL passport-type photos in person to the AAA [office nearest you](#)
- OR mail the necessary documents to the AAA [office nearest you](#)
- You can include additional U.S. funds for expedited return mail service if you want (visit [USPS.com](https://usps.com) or [DHL.com](https://dhl.com) for rates)

Mastered these training materials? Then you're ready to take the quiz! The quiz is designed to help you retain the information in the training materials. There is no time limit and you can take it as many times as you need or want to. Remember, you need at least 90% to pass before you have your departure meeting.

[Take the Quiz!](#)

If that link isn't working, just copy and paste this into your browser: <https://zfrmz.com/7eNoWQ3nUIxnFv7rbOOs>