



# Italian Language Kit

Expressions - Grammar - Online Resources - Culture



## Introduction

---

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



The Cactus Team

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

### Contact us

#### Telephone (local rate)

0845 130 4775

#### Telephone (int'l)

+44 1273 830 960

Monday-Thursday: 9am-7pm

Friday: 9am-5pm



## Essential Expressions

---

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



## Grammar and Numbers

### Indefinite articles

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

### Numbers

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

### Definite articles

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



## Useful Verbs

---

### Avere (to have)

#### Present

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

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

avevo  
avevi  
aveva  
avevamo  
avevate  
avevano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

avrò  
avrà  
avrà  
avremo  
avrete  
avranno

#### Future perfect

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

### Essere (to be)

#### Present

**sono**  
**sei**  
**è**  
**siamo**  
**siete**  
**sono**

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

ero  
eri  
era  
eravamo  
eravate  
erano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

sarò  
sarai  
sarà  
saremo  
sarete  
saranno

#### Future perfect

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



## Useful Verbs

---

### Andare (to go)

#### Present

vado  
vai  
va  
andiamo  
andate  
vanno

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

andavo  
andavi  
andava  
andavamo  
andavate  
andavano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

andrò  
andrai  
andrà  
andremo  
andrete  
andranno

#### Future perfect

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

### Parlare (to talk)

#### Present

parlo  
parli  
parla  
parliamo  
parlate  
parlano

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

parlavo  
parlavi  
parlava  
parlavamo  
parlavate  
parlavano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

parlerò  
parlerai  
parlerà  
parleremo  
parlerete  
parleranno

#### Future perfect

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



## Useful Verbs

---

### Credere (to believe)

#### Present

credo  
credi  
crede  
crediamo  
credete  
credono

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

credevo  
credevi  
credeva  
credevamo  
credevate  
credevano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

crederò  
crederai  
crederà  
crederemo  
crederete  
crederanno

#### Future perfect

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

### Dormire (to sleep)

#### Present

dormo  
dormi  
dorme  
dormiamo  
dormite  
dormono

#### Present perfect

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

#### Imperfect

dormivo  
dormivi  
dormiva  
dormivamo  
dormivate  
dormivano

#### Pluperfect

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

#### Future

dormirò  
dormirai  
dormirà  
dormiremo  
dormirete  
dormiranno

#### Future perfect

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



## Online Resources

---

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

### Dictionaries

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

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

### Pronunciation

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

### Vocabulary

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





## Online Resources

---

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

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

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

### Mobile app

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



## Take a Language Holiday

---

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

### Mainland Italy

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

### Italian Islands

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



## Cultural Differences

---

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

### Eating times

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

### Coffee

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

### Clothing

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



## Italian Culture Recommendations

---

### Books

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

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

### Music and Films

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

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



## Italian Culture Recommendations

---

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

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

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

### Food

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

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



## Italian Culture Recommendations

---

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



## Start Learning Italian

---

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

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

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

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

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



## Visit our websites

### Language Holidays

[cactuslanguage.com](http://cactuslanguage.com)

### UK Group Evening Courses

[languagecoursesuk.co.uk](http://languagecoursesuk.co.uk)

### Private Tuition

[cactuslanguagegetraining.com](http://cactuslanguagegetraining.com)

### TEFL

[cactustefl.com](http://cactustefl.com)

## Contact us

### Telephone (local rate)

0845 130 4775

### Telephone (int'l)

+44 1273 830 960

Monday-Thursday: 9am-7pm

Friday: 9am-5pm

## Our Address

103 Lorna Road

Hove

East Sussex

BN3 3EL

United Kingdom