

Look out for the following icons throughout the book:



'Shortcut' Phrase

Easy-to-remember alternative to the full phrase



Q&A Pair

'Question-and-answer' pair – we suggest a response to the question asked



Look For

Phrases you may see on signs, menus etc



Listen For

Phrases you may hear from officials, locals etc

LANGUAGE TIP

Language Tip

An insight into the foreign language

CULTURE TIP

Culture Tip

An insight into the local culture

How to read the phrases:

- Coloured words and phrases throughout the book are phonetic guides to help you pronounce the foreign language.
- Lists of phrases with tinted background are options you can choose to complete the phrase above them.

These abbreviations will help you choose the right words and phrases in this book:

f feminine

inf informal

lit literal

m masculine

pl plural

pol polite

sg singular

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Learn about Italian, build your own sentences and pronounce words correctly.

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Ready-made phrases for every situation – buy a ticket, book a hotel and much more.



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INTRO

Italian

italiano ee-ta-ly-a-no

Who speaks Italian?



OFFICIAL
LANGUAGE
ITALY
SAN MARINO
VATICAN CITY
SWITZERLAND
ISTRIA (CROATIA &
SLOVENIA)

Widely Understood Eritrea – Malta – Monaco

Why Bother

When even a simple sentence sounds like an aria, it's difficult to resist striking up a conversation. Besides, all you need for *la dolce vita* is to be able to tell your Moschino from your *macchiato* and

your Fellini from your *fettuccine*!

Distinctive Sounds

The rolled *r*, stronger than in English; most other consonants can have a more emphatic pronunciation too (in which case they're written as double letters).

65 MILLION

speak Italian as their first language

20 MILLION

speak Italian as their second language

Italian in the World

Thanks to widespread migration and the enormous popularity of Italian culture and cuisine – from ‘spaghetti Western’ to opera – Italian is often a language of choice in schools all over the world, despite the fact that Italy never established itself as a colonial power.

Italian in Italy

Italians are very proud of their language’s rich history and influence – rightly so, since it claims the closest relationship with the language spoken by the Romans. For example, Italy is one of the few countries in Europe where dubbing of foreign-language movies is preferred to subtitling.

False Friends

Warning: many Italian words look like English words but have a different meaning altogether, eg *camera ka-me-ra* is a room, not a camera (which is *macchina fotografica ma-kee-na fo-to-gra-fee-ka* in Italian).

Language Family

Romance (developed from Latin, the language of the Roman Empire). Close relatives include Spanish, Portuguese, French and Romanian.

Must-Know Grammar

Italian has a formal and informal word for ‘you’ (*Lei lay* and *tu too* respectively); the verbs have a different ending for each person, like the English ‘I do’ vs ‘he/she does’.

Donations to English

Numerous – most of us are familiar with *ciao, pasta, bella, maestro, mafia...*

10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

What's up? :: **Cosa c'è?** :: *ko·za che*

All OK? :: **Tutto a posto?** :: *too·ta pos·to*

It's OK. :: **Va bene.** :: *va be·ne*

Great! :: **Fantastico!** :: *fan·tas·tee·ko*

That's true. :: **È vero.** :: *e ve·ro*

Sure. :: **Certo.** :: *cher·to*

No way! :: **Per niente!** :: *per nyen·te*

You're kidding! :: **Scherzi!** :: *skert·see*

If only! :: **Magari!** :: *ma·ga·ree*

Really? :: **Davvero?** :: *da·ve·ro*



ABOUT Italian

Pronunciation

The Italian sound system will be familiar to most English-speakers: almost all of the sounds you'll hear exist in English. You might notice slight differences, particularly with the vowel sounds, but there's nothing to stop you from having a go and being understood. Standard Italian pronunciation is given in this book – the same form that's used in education and the media.

Vowel Sounds

Italian vowel sounds are generally shorter than in English. They normally do not run together to form vowel sound combinations (diphthongs), though it can often sound that way to English-speakers. There are four vowel sounds that roughly correspond to diphthongs in English (*ai*, *ay*, *ow*, *oy*).

SYMBOL	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	ITALIAN EXAMPLE	TRANSLITERATION
a	father	pane	pa·ne
ai	aisle	mai	mai
ay	say	vorrei	vo·ray
e	red	letto	le·to
ee	bee	vino	vee·no
o	pot	molto	mol·to
oo	took	frutta	froo·ta
ow	cow	ciao, autobus	chow, ow·to·boos
oy	boy	poi	poy

emphatic pronunciation. The actual sounds are basically the same, though meaning can be altered between a normal consonant sound and this double consonant sound. It's referred to as a 'double consonant' because usually, if the word is written with a double letter, that's the cue to use the stronger form.

Here are some examples where this 'double consonant' effect can make a difference:

sonno	<i>son·no</i>	sleep
sono	<i>so·no</i>	I am
pappa	<i>pap·pa</i>	baby food
papa	<i>pa·pa</i>	pope

Unlike the above examples, the pronunciation guides in this book don't distinguish between the two forms. Refer to the written Italian beside each transliteration as the cue to making the consonant sounds a little stronger. Even if you never distinguish them, you'll always be understood in context – your audience will work out if you're talking about the pope or baby food!

Reading & Writing

~ ITALIAN ALPHABET ~

A a a	B b bee	C c chee
D d dee	E e e	F f e-fe
G g jee	H h a·ka	I i ee
L l e-le	M m e-me	N n e-ne
O o o	P p pee	Q q koo
R r e-re	S s e-se	T t tee
U u oo	V v voo	Z z tse·ta