



Scuola Leonardo da Vinci® - Florence - Rome - Siena

Officially authorised by the Italian Ministry of Education

CENTRAL MARKETING OFFICE

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F.A.Q. - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Would you like to know more about:

A) Tuition

B) Cultural and Leisure Programme

C) Arrival / Housing

D) Transfer • Other Useful Tips

A) ALL ABOUT TUITION

Which is the next starting date?

You may start your Italian language course every 2 weeks on Mondays, even if you are a complete beginner! Please consult our course starting dates.

What should I expect to do on the first day at school?

We will wait for you at 9 am in the main reception area of the school. Students having little or no knowledge of the Italian language will attend the first lesson in which the oral capacity and the understanding will be tested. All other students will take a written and oral placement test which enables us to find the appropriate level.

Which is a typical course schedule?

STANDARD ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSE:

Florence:

09:00 - 10:45 , 30-minute break, 11:15 - 13:00

Rome:

08:45 - 10:15, 15 minutes break, 10:30 - 12:00 or

12:15 - 13:45, 15 minutes break, 14:00 - 15:30 or

14:00 - 15:30, 15 minutes break, 15:45 - 17:15 or

15:45 - 17:15, 15 minutes break, 17:30 - 19:00

Siena:

09:00 - 10:30, 15-minute break, 10:45 - 12:15 or

14:15 - 15:45, 15-minute break, 16:00 - 17:30

follows

1/7



Scuola Leonardo da Vinci - Florence

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Which is a typical course schedule *(following)***INTENSIVE ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSE:**Florence:

09:00 - 10:45, break, 11:15 - 13:00, 14:00 - 15:45

INTENSIVE PLUS ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSE:Florence:

- group lessons:
09:00 - 10:45, 30-minute break, 11:15 - 13:00
- individual lessons (one or two lessons):
14:00 - 15:45 or 16:00 - 17:45

Rome:

- group lessons:
08:45 - 10:15, 15 minutes break, 10:30 - 12:00 or
12:15 - 13:45, 15 minutes break, 14:00 - 15:30 or
14:00 - 15:30, 15 minutes break, 15:45 - 17:15 or
15:45 - 17:15, 15 minutes break, 17:30 - 19:00
- individual lessons (one or two lessons):
12:15 - 13:45 or 14:00 - 15:30 or 17:30 - 19:00

Siena:

- group lessons:
09:00 - 10:30, 20-minute break, 10:50 - 12:20 or
14:20 - 15:50, 10-minute break, 16:10 - 17:30
- individual lessons (one or two lessons):
12:30 - 14:00 or 14:20 - 15:50 or 17:30 - 19:00

For homework and exercises you should calculate about one additional hour per day.

Which books do you use in the lessons?

Our basic text and exercise books have been developed by our school. These books are used in conjunction with authentic teaching materials such as newspaper and magazine articles, audiovisual materials, and activities inside the classroom.

Is the teaching material included in the course price?

All text books and other supplies are provided by the school, but you are expected to bring your own dictionary.

Which teaching method do you use?

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci teaches according to the Direct Method: from the first day on, at all levels, only Italian will be spoken. The spoken language is the most important part of the tuition. Continually promoting the use of verbal communication permits you to learn Italian 'naturally', to unite theory and practice with no great problems and to increase your knowledge quickly and with confidence. You are encouraged to practice your spoken Italian in real-life situations, with your teacher, and with other participants, in pairs and groups. In advanced courses the written language will also be promoted.

Which is your teachers qualification?

All teachers are highly qualified. Most of them have studied Italian language and literature. All our teachers have been specially trained in teaching Italian to foreigners.

Which course certificates do students receive?**SCUOLA LEONARDO DA VINCI CERTIFICATES:**

- At the end of each course, students with regular attendance receive the certificate of attendance indicating the level of proficiency attained.
- At the end of 3rd ability level, students who passed a test receive the "Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana".
- At the end of 5th ability level, students who passed a test receive the "Diploma di Lingua Italiana".

DIPLOMAS "FIRENZE" OF THE ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DI LINGUA (AIL):

- DELI - basic level:
at the end of the first ability level;
- DILI - intermediate level:
at the end of the third ability level;
- DILC - intermediate Diploma of Business language:
at the end of the third ability level;
- DALI - advanced level:
at the end of the sixth ability level;
- DALC - advanced Diploma of Business language:
at the end of the sixth ability level.

Which is the average age of students attending the school? I'm interested in attending a course for older students aged 30 and above. Do you have suitable courses for this age group?

Sixty percent of our students are aged between 17 and 30 seeking to improve their Italian language skills and awareness of Italian culture.

Sixty percent of our students are already working; about ten percent are business managers and executives of different nationalities.

Five percent are retired and wish to improve their Italian and familiarize themselves with Italian culture.

Usually students aged 30 and more feel comfortable in our classes and enjoy to meet people from all over the world. In the Intensive Plus and Small Group Courses the average age is higher.

After twelve weeks, how much Italian will I be able to speak, assuming I am a complete beginner upon arrival, I work very hard and I am good at languages?

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci offers 6 different course levels from beginner to advanced. Each course level usually consists of 20 lessons/week over a period of 4 weeks. If you are good at languages and you work hard, it is possible to complete Beginner, Basic and Intermediate levels in 12 weeks.

At the end of the Intermediate level you already possess considerable knowledge of Italian. Your feeling for the language has become confident and your range of expressions has developed greatly and is more differentiated. You will be able to sit for the Leonardo da Vinci Certificate examination "Knowledge of the Italian language" and for the "Firenze-Diploma" DILI of the Accademia Italiana di Lingua.

B) ALL ABOUT CULTURAL AND LEISURE PROGRAMS

The three cities and the surroundings offer a nearly unlimited variety of leisure activities, which our students might undertake by themselves. We offer leisure activities as well and organise on a regular basis:

- Dinners, which enable teachers and students to get to know each other better;
- Guided visits in History of Art;
- Film evenings at school;
- Day and half-day excursions;
- Visit to wine cellars.

Every month our schools distribute their own calendar of cultural activities. In this way participants will always be well informed concerning exhibitions, concerts, films and other events. For the weekends we hand out special leaflets for individual trips. All students receive a written guide indicating active and passive sporting activities and the secretary's office can also help with the organization of sporting activities.

Can you give me an example of a monthly activity calendar in Florence?

- Day excursion to Siena and San Gimignano or Pisa and Lucca etc.; every 4 weeks, normally the first Saturday after a month course begins (at cost price).
- Half-day excursion to the vineyards of the "Chianti" area, visit to a winery incl. "merenda" (typical Tuscan afternoon snack); every 4 weeks, normally the third week after a month course begins (at cost price).
- Dinners with the school in a typical Florentine trattoria: students and teachers have a good chance to get to know each other; every 2 weeks, the 2nd day of the course after a 2 weeks course begins (at cost price).
- Free guided History of Art tours in Florence: every second and third Saturday after a month course begins.
- One or two guided museum visits the month (at cost price).

Can you give me an example of a monthly activity calendar in Rome?

- Day excursion to the seaside at Sperlonga, to Naples and Pompei, to Cortona etc.; every 4 weeks, normally the first Saturday after a month course begins (at cost price).
- Dinner with the school in a typical Roman restaurant; every 4 weeks (at cost price).
- Free guided History of Art visits in Rome: every week.
- Free cinema italiano: every 2 weeks.
- Free diction lessons: every 2 weeks.
- Free concert evenings at school: every 2 weeks.

Can you give me an example of a monthly activity calendar in Siena?

- Dinner in a typical Tuscan country house: teachers and students get a good chance to get to know each other; every 4 weeks (at cost price).
- Half day excursion with private bus to the surroundings of Siena, i.e. vineyards in the "Chianti" region, Montepulciano, San Galgano, incl. "merenda" (typical Tuscan afternoon snack); every 2 weeks (at cost price).
- Guided tours around the city; every 2 weeks.
- History of Art tours to some of the most important sights in Siena, as the Duomo, Pinacothèque (art gallery), Palazzo Pubblico etc.; every 2 weeks.
- The Italian cinema: a film presentation with comments and discussion; every 2 weeks.
- Seminar: the History of the "Palio" - historical horse race: 4 lessons in the afternoon and visit of the museum of a "Contrada", for beginners as well as for advanced students; in the summer months.
- The Italian music: an afternoon listening to the Italian music and learning about different groups and singers; every month.

C) ALL ABOUT ARRIVAL, TRANSFER & HOUSING (A - Z)**Accommodation in host-family:**

In selecting host families, we do not look for luxury and comfort in the material sense but for Italian families who appreciate receiving foreign students. Additionally, the word 'family' should not be taken too literally, as a family can be 'traditional' with children, a single parent or a childless couple who take in students because they enjoy the company.

Hand-washing of clothes as well as the use of the ironing board is permitted with no extra charge. The use of the washing-machine is not included, but arrangements can be made between the landlord, the school and the student.

Accommodation in a shared apartment:

You share a flat or floor of a house either with other students from our school, with other Italian students or with the owner.

Kitchen and bathroom are of common use.

The apartments are furnished and the kitchens are supplied with all essential kitchen utilities (cutlery, plates, pans etc.).

You can prepare your meals separately or together with your flatmates and fellow students.

Electricity, gas water, local costs and taxes are included in the price.

The apartments are cleaned before your arrival. During the stay, you and your flatmates are responsible for the cleaning of your room and of the rooms used in common (kitchen and bathroom).

Bed-linens are provided and changed every two weeks (in the Extra Comfort Apartments every week), but you need to bring your own towels.

Please note, that we may request a deposit of 100 Euro for shared apartment accommodation. This deposit must be paid in cash at arrival and will be refunded on your departure, less reparation costs if needed.

There is no telephone in the apartment.

You should bring some food for the Sunday of arrival and Monday morning, as food stores are closed on Sundays.

Italy uses a 220 Volts/AC system. Plugs may differ from those in your home country and it's possible that you need an adapter.

Accommodation in Extra Comfort shared Apartments:

Our shared Extra Comfort Apartments are of various sizes, each one offering a welcoming and functional atmosphere. Residents share bathroom and kitchen. The linens are changed weekly and the common areas are cleaned on a weekly basis as well. The apartments are not equipped with telephone lines. Each room has a safe. We recommend booking early as there are only a few extra comfort apartments available.

Accommodation reservations:

To make reservations for accommodation, we need your (or your parents) credit card number as guarantee deposit. Together with the confirmation of the address we will inform you about the exact rent of the booked accommodation. Please pay this amount within the first three days upon arrival in Italy. By paying the rent you accept the accommodation arranged. In case you would like to change accommodation we ask you to discuss this with our secretariat before paying the rent.

Accommodation in a private apartment:

Private apartments (i.e. independent flats) are more comfortable than shared apartments and therefore more expensive. They are available for one or more persons. Prices are available on request. Please note that the private apartments must be reserved well in advance and the prices may vary depending on the city and season. Scuola Leonardo da Vinci only makes the reservations. Payment has to be made directly to the apartment owner or real estate agency, i.e. we need your credit card number to make reservations.

Accommodation in a Hotel:

We work with Hotels situated close to the schools (basic offer always: bed & breakfast, rooms with shower or bathroom). Prices are available on request and according to the categories of hotels and the season. Scuola Leonardo da Vinci only makes the reservations. Payment has to be made directly to the Hotel receptionist, i.e. we need your credit card number to make reservations. Please make Hotel reservation well in advance.

Accommodation in Residences:

One, two and three-roomed apartments with either two, three or four beds in each; a lounge, a fitted kitchen area, bathroom with shower, direct dial telephone, air conditioning, television and daily cleaning services. On request, there are normally the following supplementary services: parking, breakfast, secretarial services and a safe for valuables. Scuola Leonardo da Vinci only makes the reservations. Payment has to be made directly to the Residence receptionist, i.e. we need your credit card number to make reservations. Please make reservation well in advance.

Availability:

Housing reservations run from the Sunday evening before the beginning of the course to the Saturday morning (12:00 am) at the end of the course. If you need to arrive a day earlier or to stay a day longer, please contact the school for help with extra accommodation arrangements. Different arrival or departure days must be confirmed in writing.

However, for host family and shared apartment accommodation it is not possible to arrive earlier than the Saturday before the start of the course and/or to remain later than the Sunday after the end of the course.

Arrival date and time:

We need to be informed at least 4 days in advance of your arrival day and time. Therefore, upon receiving the accommodation address, you have to contact the landlord (by telephone) or the school (by telephone, fax or e-mail) to communicate the date and time of arrival in order to make the waiting time for both parts as short as possible. If there is no communication, you will be expected to arrive in the evening, after 6:00 pm.

Bed-linens / towels:

Bed-linens are provided and changed every 2 weeks (in the Extra Comfort Apartments every week) but you need to bring your own towels.

Car parking:

Garages and paid parking spaces are easy to find in the city centers as well as in the suburbs. There are cheaper weekly and monthly season tickets available. Your students can also ask their landlords for the closest garage or parking area to the accommodation. Should a student park the car on the street, she/he should consult the street signs or ask the landlord on which night the weekly street cleaning ("*pulizia della strada*") takes place in the area. On that night the car must be parked elsewhere. All cars parked in a prohibited area will be removed.

Laundry:

Shared apartments: There is no washing-machine in the apartments. You may use the many self-service laundromats.

Host families: Hand-washing of clothes as well as the use of the ironing board is permitted with no extra charge. The use of the washing-machine is not included, but arrangements may be made between the landlord and the student.

Location:

Our accommodations are located in the city centers as well as in the suburbs. In any case you can easily reach the school and the center of the cities by public transport. To get from the suburbs to the center takes 15 - 25 minutes by public transport (Rome up to 50 minutes). If you have been placed in the town center (if available) it takes about 15 minutes walking to reach the school.

Meals:

If you book host family accommodation you can choose between breakfast and half board (breakfast and dinner). You will have your meals together with the family but you should be aware that Italian eating habits can be rather different from your own. Breakfast usually only consists of coffee or tea and bread, butter, marmelade. Dinner is a complete meal served normally at around 8:00 pm.

Payment of accommodation:

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci only makes the reservations for accommodation. We need your (or your parents) credit card number as guarantee deposit. Payment for accommodation has to be made within the first three days upon arrival in Italy.

Room-mating with another student:

We recommend to book a 'place in a double room' only for young people. According to our experience mature people normally do not feel at ease in a double room as they may have to share it with very young people who have different habits and attitudes.

Transfer:

At arrival, we recommend that you take a taxi to your accommodation. Taxis are:

- 1) easily found at the TAXI stations, which are always in front of the train station and the airport;
- 2) the best way to bring your luggage to your 'new home';
- 3) not expensive.

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci also offers a transfer service from the airports in Rome and Florence and from the train stations in Florence, Rome and Siena. For prices please consult our current price list. If you wish the school to arrange a transfer, please send us the arrival information (date and time of arrival and flight or train number) possibly with the enrollment form or at least one week before your arrival date.

D) ALL ABOUT ... USEFUL INFORMATION (A - Z)**Check list:**

- Valid passport or identity card;
- Tickets and reservations;
- Insurance documents;
- Money, traveler's cheques and credit cards;
- Personal medicine or medical prescriptions;
- E111 form (for citizens from EU countries);
- Italian address given to parents, etc.;
- School informed about arriving time;
- Transfer requested from school.

Climate:

Although summer in Italy, from the Alps to Sicily, is quite warm, the winter in Northern and Central Italy can be quite cool; winter in the south, however, is relatively mild. The best weather in the cities is in spring and autumn.

Average summer temperatures range from 18°C to 30°C (64°F to 86°F), the average winter temperature is around 4°C to 16°C (39°F to 61°F).

Credit Cards / Traveller's Cheques:

Traveller's Cheques and Credit Cards are accepted almost everywhere. You can receive money at Automatic Teller Machines (ATM), if you have an ATM card linked to an international network (Bancomat, Postomat, EC, Cirrus, Plus, Maestro etc.). Mastercard and Visa (with PIN number) may be used to withdraw cash from an ATM machine. Cash from ATM's only in Euro. You should not forget that the daily amount is limited.

Credits for American Universities:

We can send transcripts to American Universities, where our courses are usually accepted as valid language credits. Please ask us for more information.

Electricity:

Italy uses a 220 Volts/AC system. Additionally, wall sockets and plugs may differ from those in your home country. Be sure to get information about the possible need for an adapter before your departure.

Exchanging money:

When exchanging large amounts of money it is usually better to do it in Italy. However, you should also bring cash for the first few days (for the taxi, for purchasing small things, etc.). Avoid to change money in change offices because of high commission rates; the best exchange rates are at the bank. For a stay of more than 3 months, it may even be useful to open a bank account. Our staff will give you further information on it.

Fax:

Faxes can be sent from the post office, from a lot of stationer's shops (cartoleria) and from copy shops. At our schools you can receive faxes free of charge and send them (against a fee).

Financial support?

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci awards 50 school or university students scholarships entitling them to a 100 percent reduction in the cost of a four-week standard course, not including accommodation. If you wish to apply for one of our scholarships, you are requested to submit an application and registration form to the Italian Culture Institute or your University, enclosing a reference from your Italian teacher, and stating the precise name and address of your school/university, and of the teacher concerned.

Insurance:

Our students are assured (accidents) during their way to school (one hour before lessons start and one hour after lessons), during classes and during organized spare time activities.

Participants are not insured the time outside the school (in accommodation or spending their free time somewhere). They are not insured against illness, accidents, theft or loss of personal possessions, either by the schools or by those offering the accommodation. We therefore recommend taking out a personal insurance policy.

During your stay in Italy, you must be personally insured against illness and accident. Citizens from European Union countries are entitled to free medical care in Italy if they hold an E111 form which can be obtained from their local health authority in their home country before departing for Italy.

Students from non-EU countries must enquire with the authorities in their countries to know if they are insured during a stay abroad; if they are not covered, they should arrange health insurance to cover their stay in Italy.

Moreover, participants are advised to insure against loss of fees due to non-arrival, absence or unexpected termination of their course. Contact your travel agent for further details or contact our school.

Internet access and sending & receiving emails:

The email addresses of our schools can be used for the receipt of private messages. Close to our schools there are Internet centers, where you can work with Internet and email (against a fee).

Italian Currency / €uro - European Union currency:

The basic unit of Italian currency is the **€uro**.

When exchanging large amounts of money it is usually better to wait until you arrive in Italy. However, you should also bring cash for the first few days (for the taxi, for purchasing small things, etc.). Avoid changing your money in change offices because of high commission rates; you will receive the best exchange rate at the bank.

Health, Medical Doctors and Pharmacies:

The first-aid service in the Emergency Room of the hospital is free for anyone who is in need.

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci can provide a doctor whenever you are in need of a consultation or medical care.

In every city you will find 24-hour pharmacies. You should not forget to bring, if necessary, your own medical prescriptions.

National Holidays:

Our schools are closed on the following national and local public holidays: January 6th (Epiphany, called "Befana"), Easter Monday, April 25th (National Holiday), May 1st (Labour Day), June 2nd (Republic Day), June 24th (Saint John, Florence only), June 29th (Saint Peter and Paul, Rome only), August 15th (Assumption Day, called "Ferragosto"), November 1st (All Saints), December 8th (Immaculate Conception). Lessons are not held, not made up and not refunded.

Pocket money:

This is not the same for every person but we think that Euro 80 per week, in addition to the costs for accommodation and food, should be enough.

Telephone:

International telephone calls can be made from all public telephones (in the telephone offices, in bars, etc.). Also, the schools in Florence and Rome have a public telephone and a credit-card telephone.

The country code for Italy is «39»:

'Land phone': The country code must always be followed by the «0» before the area code;

'Mobile phone': There will never be the «0» before the number.

Traveling by train:

There are several night- and Eurocity-day-connections with Italy. People under 26 years may receive special discounts. Reservations for sleeping car or couchettes should be made as early as possible. Siena is connected with Florence and Rome by a public bus or by the train.

Traveling by car:

All of our course locations are conveniently located on the national motorways.

In the old city centres parking is normally not allowed. In all other districts parking is free of charge except for specially marked short term parking zones. Paid parking in garages is usually available near our schools.

Traveling by air:

Our schools in Florence and Siena can be reached from the airports in Florence, Pisa and Rome-Fiumicino. The school in Rome is easily reached from Fiumicino airport.

Visa:

Citizens from the European Union do not need a visa and can enter Italy with an Identification card or Passport. Citizens from other countries should check with the nearest Italian Embassy or Consulate.

If you need a visa to extend your stay for more than 90 days you should apply for a 'Type D'(student) visa. Scuola Leonardo da Vinci will provide you, after enrolment and payment of the deposit, with a certificate of enrolment for your visa application.

World time zones:

Italy uses Middle-European-Time (MET):

- Rome: ±0;
- London: - 1;
- New York: - 6;
- Los Angeles: - 9;
- Tokyo: +8.

From the end of March to the end of October the clocks in Italy are turned ahead one hour.

Nota bene:

If you didn't find what you were looking for, please feel free to enquire by phone, fax or email:

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