

Tips for Travellers – Schools and Scholarships

Studying Italian in Italy is an immersive and rewarding experience, offering an unparalleled opportunity to develop language skills in an authentic setting. Language schools can be found throughout the country, from bustling cities like Rome and Milan to charming towns in Tuscany and coastal regions. They cater to all levels, from absolute beginners to advanced learners, and provide an excellent way to refine speaking and listening skills while experiencing Italian culture firsthand.

Choosing a Language School

Most language schools in Italy follow a similar structure. Courses can range from a single week to several months, but the most common durations are two or four weeks. Class formats vary, with options for private one-on-one lessons or group classes. Group classes, which typically run for four hours per day, five days a week, are a popular choice as they offer a balance between structured learning and social interaction.

On the first day, students usually take a placement test—often a mix of a multiple-choice exam and an oral discussion—to determine the appropriate class level. Classes are conducted entirely in Italian and attract students from all over the world, creating a diverse and dynamic learning environment.

Daily Schedule and Learning Methods

For a standard four-hour daily class:

- The day typically starts at 9:00 AM with two hours dedicated to grammar and language structure.
- After a short break for coffee and a snack, the second session focuses on more interactive activities, such as analysing newspaper articles, discussing films, playing language-based games, or practicing conversational skills.
- Class sizes generally range from 8 to 12 students, ensuring a personalized yet interactive learning experience.

Extracurricular Activities

Most language schools offer free or low-cost afternoon and weekend activities, which may include:

- Guided walking tours of the town or city.
- Excursions to nearby historical or cultural sites.
- Lectures on Italian literature, politics, or cinema.
- Cooking demonstrations or wine tastings.
- Weekend trips to famous landmarks for an additional fee.

These activities provide students with a deeper cultural appreciation while reinforcing language skills in real-world settings.

Accommodation Options

Schools generally assist students in finding accommodation, which may include:

- Private or shared apartments.
- Hotel or bed-and-breakfast options.
- Homestays with Italian families, available with full or partial board.

Prices are typically reasonable, but it is advisable to ensure that the accommodation is conveniently located near the school to maximise participation in social activities.

Scholarships and Discounts

Many schools offer scholarships or discounted fees, particularly for students affiliated with Dante Alighieri Societies or other Italian cultural organisations. Checking the school's website, or consulting with your Dante teacher can provide details on available opportunities.

Preparing for Your Studies

To make the most of your experience, consider bringing:

- An English-Italian dictionary or a language app for quick reference.
- A grammar book focused on verb conjugations and prepositions.
- A notebook for jotting down new vocabulary and expressions.

For online language support, useful resources include:

- [WordReference](#)
- [Italian Wiktionary](#)
- [Wiktionary \(English\)](#)

Final Thoughts

Attending a language school in Italy is an invaluable experience that combines language learning with cultural exploration. Many fellow students from the Dante Alighieri Society have attended different schools across Italy, and their reviews can often be found in past newsletters. If you have any specific questions about schools I have attended, feel free to reach out—I'd be happy to share my experiences and recommendations!

Buon viaggio e buono studio!