

YOUR COMPLETE ITALY TRAVEL GUIDE



I'm pretty sure Italy is literally the number one country on everyone's bucket list (in America at least). It was for me! My friend Kelly and I liked to plan trips together. Right after I graduated college we said okay let's plan the next one, both probably thinking it would be some state in the US. But I threw out an idea – I've always dreamed of going to Italy...???? And she was in! And we planned it! My first international trip without parents! The first step in any trip is always to figure out where to go and then to pick the cities (check out my **step-by-step template** to booking a trip for a refresher). As a beach lover (did you know that?), my dream had always been to go to the **Amalfi Coast**. My girlfriend Kelly loves history so we knew Rome would be a contender too. And from there we ran with it!

Since that one week trip to Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Amalfi, Positano, and Capri, (classic Americans trying to do as much as we could in as little time as possible) I have been back to Italy four more times and still have sooo many places I want to go. I figured this guide would be a good place for anyone to start who is thinking about doing an Italian trip. I'll put together a little guide to every popular city / region and provide some insights and suggested routes along the way.

If you're trying to figure out if you should go to Italy, here's how I would sum up the country:

- Italian food and wine everywhere•
- Very old, charming towns (that can at time feel like they're literally about to crumble)•
 - History and culture•
- Some of the most picturesque sea/lake-side destinations•
 - A general laid-back vibe•
 - Romance•

•Gorgeous Alps mountain ranges and hikes•

•LOTS of tourists•

The draw for me was mainly the charming towns and the seaside spots – I mean look at Italy on a map, there is so much coastline – it's like my dream come true. But I'm sure everyone would have a different combination of reasons why they want to visit this country. From beaches to lakes to towns to culture to food to wine even to hiking – Italy literally has it all. It's great for honeymoon, family trips, friend trips, relaxing getaways, cultural excursions, and so much more.

I would definitely spend at least a week in Italy and preferably even longer. I think the only way I could see everything I want to see in this country is to spend at least a month. It's difficult to pick which places to go to if you don't have a month (I highly doubt you have a month), so keep reading to help you choose!



Screenshot

Google

WHERE SHOULD I GO IN ITALY?

The best way to split this is probably Northern Italy and Southern Italy. If you only have a week, you will definitely want to stick to one of these regions so that you are not wasting too much time traveling between the two – the exception is Rome which is kind of in the middle geographically speaking and could be your starting or end point for either side. If you have two weeks, you can easily spend that whole time just in one region, but most likely you are going to want to spend one week at either end. With that, I'll start with the biggest hits of Northern Italy and then include some off-the-beaten-path stops – then I'll switch to Southern Italy and do the same!

NORTHERN ITALY

The North and South of Italy are said to be very different and the people consider themselves very different from one another – not dissimilar to the north and the south in the US. The North of Italy is supposed to be more cultural, educated, and business-oriented. This makes sense with the larger cities like Milan and Florence and the bordering countries. The North is also more diverse in terms of the geography – in the Northeast you have the mountainous region called the Dolomites, the famous lakes – **Como** and Garda, the stunning Ligurian coastline including **Cinque Terre**, and the beautiful countryside of **Tuscany**. The North definitely has more “greatest hits” than the South – Florence, Venice, Tuscany, Cinque Terre, Lake Como and Garda, the Dolomites.

As far as food (v important), the differences between the North and the South are also pretty noticeable.

Since the North is mostly pastures and land, beef is heavily featured – from the Florentine steaks to soups. The North is also the home of most hard cheeses and cured meats – Parma (home of parmesan, prosciutto di parma), Genoa (salami), and Bologna are all in the North. So if you're a meat and cheese board kind of person – they will be everywhere in the North. As far as what you typically think of when you think of Italy – pizza and pastas – these are actually more Southern Italian foods. The North is home to creamy dishes like risotto and polenta. However, Genoa and the surrounding regions (Cinque Terre) are known for pesto so you can find pesto pasta everywhere here.



FLORENCE

I feel like this is the number one city people want to come to in Northern Italy at least, but sadly I have never been! I'm so much more of a countryside/beach girl that it just hasn't been a priority. But I'm sure you know what it's all about – lots of culture and art and museums (mainly art), beautiful buildings and views, good food, etc. Florence is actually technically in **Tuscany** so a lot of people combine the two. I've had some friends say it was their favorite city ever and some friends that didn't like it.

Go mainly for:

- Art•
- A combo with Tuscany•
- A charming Italian city that's not too big but not too small•
- Bistecca alla fiorentina and much more food and wine•

VENICE

I am so happy to have gone to Venice in August of 2020 when all the tourists (especially cruise ships) were absent. It is so unique with all the canals and that just-about-to-tumble-into-the-water look of all the buildings. Unfortunately, lots of people love this place and the crowds are usually unbearable. The crowds are also legitimately ruining the city because it is too fragile to handle that many people! So if you want to go, try to go in the off season (basically anything outside the summer), and also when it's not as hot (July and August). Our waiter told us his restaurant (Vini Da Artuto) normally closes for all of August, as do most of the less-touristy spots. And it was seriously so freaking hot in August.

We had one day in Venice and that was plenty for us. We are not very artistically inclined, so none of the museums were calling our name. And the main "must-see" areas of the city are all very close and easy to do in one day. We walked around the main square (St. Mark's Square), opted not to go into Doge's Palace (but if you do, buy your ticket in advance to avoid the line), opted for a 1 hour water taxi tour of the city over a gondola ride, cooled off with some drinks at the St. Regis (highly recommend), walked over Rialto Bridge, and really just wandered the rest of the time with meals in between (we marked everywhere that Phil went on "Somebody Feel Phil" on Netflix and they were all incredible).

I know some people too who haven't liked this city at all and some people who loved it. I think you will love it if you love water/boats and/or art. One thing to note is that the water taxis are sooo expensive. It was 130 Euros each way from the airport to our hotel. So either budget that into your trip or pick a hotel that's closer to the airport or closer to the public transportation water busses which are a few euros each.

Go mainly for:

- Romance•
- Wandering around a beautiful city•
- Art museums•







CINQUE TERRE

What do you know – I have been here! And it's a beach! I fell totally in love with Cinque Terre. My husband and I went in August when we first moved to London which probably should have been a terrible month to go, full of tourists, but I still loved it. My [guide to Cinque Terre](#) is one of my favorite ones I've ever done because it's so small that I truly feel like I was able to capture every part of it. It is so detailed of what to do, where to eat, etc.

Cinque Terre is essentially five villages all along the coast that are connected by train. Each village is unique and distinct. The villages are set against the steep cliffs and look really beautiful from the water – colourful buildings set against craggy cliffs and the blue ocean. Cinque Terre is the perfect place to spend a week and unwind – eating your dinner next to the waves, taking a morning swim just off the town square, getting focaccia to go and then sunbathing, hiking from town to town to work off said focaccia. It's super dreamy.

I cover this in [my travel guide](#) so much more, but I was surprised to find how much more chill Cinque Terre was to Positano. Positano was kind of all about the glitz and glam, similar to [the French Riviera](#), so that's what I was expecting. But Cinque Terre is more like your favorite beach town that you grew up near – where you go to dinner in your cover up and sandals. It's much more relaxing. I kind of loved it, but if you are looking for more glamour – [Amalfi Coast](#) is probably more for you.

Go mainly for:

- The sheer beauty of it•
- A little mix of hiking and beaching•

- Pesto, pasta, and foccacia•
- Laid-back relaxation•







TUSCANY

TBH one of my top five places I've ever gone. I had no idea how much I would love it until I was there (I don't even really like chianti wine that much). What got me was just the sheer beauty of the region. We rented a car and driving through the hills honestly brought me close to tears! It's just beautiful! You have these ancient towns set on top of these hills – approaching them is stunning, being in the towns and looking out over the valley is stunning. And the villas that you can stay in / rent / visit for wine tours – they are just so incredibly beautiful as well. The food is so fresh and delicious – definitely my favorite meals I've had in Italy – and of course the wine is plentiful.

It's a place to go and *stay*, not just a place to check off your list. Rent a car and explore as much of it as you can – but slowly! Or just find a beautiful place to stay and leave for wine tours and fabulous dinners only – spending your days by the pool, walking through the olive groves, or reading with a glass of wine overlooking the valleys below.

My **guide to Tuscany** covers all of the different towns, how to choose where to stay, what our favourites were from our trip, and more. This area is huge though, so there's no way my guide could cover everything. I think what we did do was top, top notch though – so if you follow my suggestions alone and save the time of doing your own hours of research – I promise you won't be disappointed.

Go mainly for:

- Food and wine in the countryside•
- Beautiful valleys and views and towns•
- Relaxation away from the city•





LAKE COMO

I know a lot of people that have Lake Como on their bucket list and probably because of the celebrities and such that seem to call this place home away from home. It is super glamorous and beautiful and an amazing place to relax and soak in some sun. In my opinion, Lake Como is better to come to and actually enjoy yourself rather than trying to explore as much of the lake as possible. The beauty of it can be seen simply from your hotel or AirBnB balcony and you don't need to chase other views to experience that beauty!

I went with some girlfriends on a relaxing weekend getaway full of wine overlooking the water, renting a boat and spending the day on the water, and picking one gorgeous villa to spend a few hours at and get some culture in. I feel similar about Tuscany and Lake Como – don't just go to check it off your list – you'll find so much more enjoyment if you can spend a few days just soaking it in.

My **guide to Lake Como** covers a lot of logistics on how to get there from the airport, how to get around the lake, where you can rent a boat from, what I think are the best hotels to stay at, and more.

Go mainly for:

- Relaxing on the water•
- Feeling fancy / George and Amal sightings•
- Exploring some gorgeous villas•
- Mountain hikes•







LAKE GARDA

If you are someone who would rather go somewhere undiscovered, somewhere that's not already all over your Instagram feed – Lake Garda could be a great choice! It's the lesser known, less touristy Lake Como halfway between Milan and Venice. Well technically it is still touristy, but with German tourists. So what do you fancy – Germans or Americans?? It is almost as stunning as Lake Como – well the region we went was pretty but not as pretty as Lake Como. I think if you stay in Gordone, that's supposed to be gorgeous and luxurious. It is a much bigger lake than Lake Como so once again – you should probably only go there if you find a hotel that looks really nice and you just want to chill – it would be impossible to try and explore the whole thing! If you do want to explore a bit – from my research Sirmione, Riva del Garda, Garda, Gardone, Limone, and Torbole are supposed to be gorgeous. We grabbed dinner in Malsesine one night and loved that town too.

Go mainly for:

- Como vibes without the cost or tourists•
- Relaxing on the water•
- Mountain hikes•





DOLOMITES

When quarantine ended, I wanted some fresh air and lots of it. I asked my husband if we could go back to Switzerland, and he said no because it was so expensive. So I googled “is there anywhere as pretty as Switzerland without the price”, and everything pointing towards the Dolomites filling that role, but claiming it was even prettier than Switzerland. Well I can confirm – this place is beyond gorgeous. We did several 10 – 13 km hikes and every one was prettier than anything we had ever done.

I highly, highly recommend going to the Dolomites over Switzerland because of the cost, the fact that you can eat Italian food, and it’s so much less visited than Switzerland. I’ll do a whole post on the Dolomites soon!

Go mainly for:

- Nature•
- Mountains and Lakes•
- Switzerland without the cost or tourists•









MILAN

Okay we are back to some places I haven't been before, Milan being one of them. From what I have heard from friends and Italians, Milan is not super "pretty". It is more of the industrial / business center of Italy than a tourist destination. The only reason why I can think you would want to add Milan onto your trip is if you are super into fashion or you really want to see the famous cathedral, the Duomo. And even then, you're probably only going to want to spend a night or two. Milan is also the closest airport to Lake Como.

I am actually tempted to go and have a food weekend because I just found this **restaurant guide to Milan** from Bon Appetit and flights from London are always like £30.

Go mainly for:

- Fashion / shopping•
- To see the Duomo•

PIEDMONT

The westernmost part of the country that borders France is known as Piedmont. Piedmont is said to be the culinary and wine capital of the whole country, and how cool that you've probably never heard of it?? It would be such a great place to visit to see a less-touristy but gorgeous part of Italy. I have come across a couple of articles that seriously just put this region on my bucket list. Piedmont is centered around the town Turin. You can either fly into Turin or rent a car from Milan drive 1-1/2 hours to this region. The pictures of this region are little jaw-dropping – rolling hills of vineyards set against the white-capped mountains of the Alps. Please check out **this travel guide** for pictures of the region and **this travel guide** for where to eat and drink.

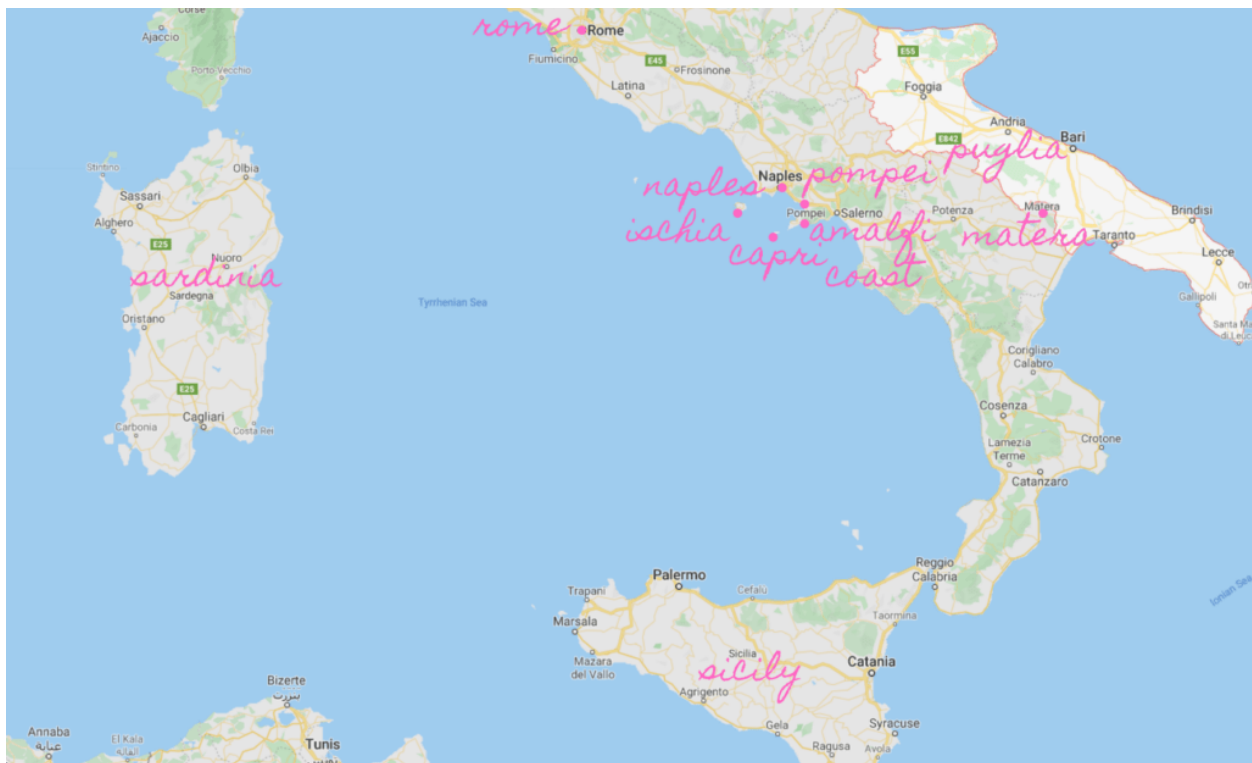
Go mainly for:

- Tuscany without the cost or tourists•
- Food and wine in the countryside•
- Beautiful valleys and views and towns•
- Exploring super cute towns•

SOUTHERN ITALY

Southern Italy is said to be very religious and more hospitable than the North (similar to the stereotypes in the US). The South is home to the biggest city in Italy – Rome, and one of the most popular destinations ever – **the Amalfi Coast**. The rest of the region is a little bit less well-known or visited – Naples, Pompeii, Mt. Vesuvius, Puglia, the islands (Sicily, Sardinia, Ischia), Matera.

The cuisine of this region is very different from that of the north. In Rome specifically (which most consider Central Italy), you will have tons of pizza and pasta. Rome is most known for a few very delicious pasta dishes – carbonara, cacio e pepe, and bucatini all'amatriciana (essentially tomato sauce with pork). Naples is the birthplace of pizza so this is where you want to go if you are a pizza person. The south is also mostly known for it's Mediterranean diet with lots of fresh seafood and vegetables. Tomatoes, eggplants, and mozzarella are also from this region – hence the pizza! And tomato-based pastas!



ROME

TBH it's hard to visit Italy and not go to Rome. I mean name a city in Europe with more historical and cultural landmarks! It's truly incredible! I absolutely loved Rome when we went. It's on my list to make a travel guide for this city even though I went 5 years ago and Google Maps deleted all my starred places by now! But I still have a lot of what we did recorded – so look out for that! In the meantime, here's what you must do:

Visiting the Vatican was maybe my favorite bit of culture I have ever done on an international trip. I was blown away by the beauty of it. I recommend booking your tickets ahead of time to get a time and date that you want. Near the Vatican, grab coffee at Sciascia – said to be the best coffee in Rome. After the Vatican we picked up Prosecco, prosciutto, parma, olives, and bread at Franchi and headed to Villa Borghese for a picnic. Piazza del Popolo is beautiful as well, right next to the park. After that, you can stop into the Borghese Museum if you want to see fabulous art. From there you can go see the Spanish Steps and gawk at the designer shops near there.

We dedicated a whole day to exploring the Roman Forum and Colosseum. We started the day with a coffee at Caffè Sant'Eustachio – a very famous coffee shop in Rome. Then we walked to Capitoline Hill to get a panoramic view over the Roman and Imperial Forums. From there we walked to the Colosseum through the ruins. (I think it would be a great idea to download Rick Steves' app and do an audio tour of the Forums so that you can get an idea of what you are looking at, same for the Colosseum). We purchased our Colosseum tickets ahead of time to not have to wait in a long line. After that we grabbed lunch at a random spot on the streets that ended up being one of our favorite meals – just look for a place where a lot of locals are eating! We then visited the Parthenon and the Trevi Fountain before dinner. I recommend using **Katie Parla's blog** to pick where to eat and drink while in Rome. Her information is the best on the internet and we used it for our stay in Rome.

I also recommend spending some time in all of the plazas around the city (Campo d' Fiori, Piazza Navona), eating a lot of gelato, wandering through Trastevere, and just getting lost in the city. Truly every corner you turn is something old and beautiful. It's a really enchanting city! One of our favorite nights was getting wine and sitting outside at Antico Caffè del Moro in Trastevere and then getting pizza and house wine sitting outside at Ai Marmi. Eating al fresco in Rome will be one of the best parts of your trip.

In regards to where to stay, definitely stay somewhere in the centre of the city where you can walk everywhere. We were able to walk everywhere which made it super nice. Our AirBnB was close to Piazza Navona which was a great location, but any hotels or AirBnBs would be great. Our trip was in mid-May and the temperatures were already scorching. I am prone to sweat but I was wearing sundresses and sneakers and still sweating profusely during the day. The nights were cooler and you might need a light scarf or sweater.

Go mainly for:

- All the culture•
- World-class museums•
- Pizza and pasta and wine•
- Charming architecture•









AMALFI COAST

So much to say about the fabulous, over-crowded, stunning Amalfi Coast. This place truly is gorgeous and jaw-dropping and Positano to this day is one of my favorite places I have ever been. I'm sure you know all about it as it floods your Pinterest and Instagram feeds from travel bloggers, influencers, and all your friends' honeymoons. It's a bucket list place for sure! We went in May when the crowds weren't there (but neither was the heat). The bad part of Amalfi Coast is that it isn't super easy to get to and it's pretty far removed from all the rest of Italy that people generally want to go to. It can also be pretty terrible in August when it is peak crowded.

I am also including Capri in my mind as part of the Amalfi Coast even though it is an island off the coast of the Amalfi Coast. It is a tiny, beautiful island full of glamour. The shops and restaurants are extremely expensive so go here if you have money to blow. We did a day trip here on a boat and that was perfect! Ischia is an island that you can ferry to from Amalfi Coast / Naples as well that is said to be just as cute as Capri but without the price tag or American tourists. It doesn't look like it has any glitz or glam or nightlife but could be a good option if you want an island trip but don't want to break the bank.

My **guide to Amalfi Coast** covers how to get there, where to stay, what to do, and what to buy. It's pretty thorough for such a small region and should hopefully help you plan your trip! Also feel free to LOL at the overly filtered photos that came from lovely 2015.

Go mainly for:

- Italian glitz and glam•
- Stunning views from the hills and the sea•
- Shopping and souvenirs•
- Private boat tours to Capri•
- Partying on the rocks•





NAPLES

After we left Rome we took a train to Naples and spent one night there. Naples is probably the city that I have felt the least safe in *ever*. We literally had a woman right in front of us get her necklace ripped off her neck and stolen – in broad daylight on a busy street! Thankfully our B&B host made us take off all of our fake gold jewelry and tie our purses closed before we left her sight. Besides that, Naples was where we ate some of our best meals of our entire trip. Naples is the birthplace of pizza (Neapolitan pizza, get it?) and also has this one ragu restaurant that still to this day has me rolling my eyes in desire – it was amazing.

If you decide to go, just know that you need to be super careful. And honestly, maybe things have changed in the past 5 years and I am being naive. But here is what we did and what we ate and what I can recommend:

We stayed at an adorable B&B that I can definitely recommend called Atmosphere del Centro Storica. I'm sure there are lots of other great hotels as well. In our less than 24 hours there we ate pizza for lunch at Di Matteo, visited Christmas Alley to see the strange but impressive wooden nativities and other dolls that you can purchase, visited Monastero di Santa Chiara, got Prosecco down on the water, got gelato at Scimmia, and then got dinner at Tandem Ristorante (the location on via Sedile di porto) that was incredible.

I really loved our whole itinerary! **Katie Parla's blog**, mentioned above in Rome, has great recommendations for pizza and Di Matteo isn't on there so maybe try one of those (I want to go to Gino e Toto Sorbillo next time). The monastery was really gorgeous and we got lots of really pretty pictures there (below). I think it's a worthwhile stop! But definitely just one night in my opinion!

Another destination to note off the coast of Naples is the island of Ischia. It looks totally gorgeous and is basically sold as Capri without the cost or American tourists. Something to think about! You can take a ferry there from Naples.

Go mainly for:

•Pizza•





POMPEII

On the way from Naples to Amalfi Coast, you pass both Mt. Vesuvius and Pompeii. We had a special request to stop in Pompeii so we did! It was really neat, but I think it is important to do some kind of tour to understand what you are looking at – maybe again you can download something ahead of time to give you a free audio walking guide (I like Rick Steves' app). It's a really large site that we just walked around for a couple of hours.

For us, we hired a private driver to drive us from Naples to Pompeii and then onto Amalfi. This worked for us since there were four of us and we could split the cost. I'm not sure how you do it without a driver but I am sure there is some sort of bus option if this is something you want to do. Or you can just rent a car for the day and stop at Mt. Vesuvius as well.

Go mainly for:

•History•





PUGLIA

Puglia is on my 2021 bucket list! I have heard of Puglia for a few years now from some Italian chefs that I admire, a friend who honeymooned there, and a travel blogger who I love that just went there and **took amazing photos**.

From what I can gather, it is just as stunning as Cinque Terre and Amalfi Coast, but a lot cheaper and less visited leading to lower prices and a more authentic feel. In order to experience it, you explore all the little villages that each have their own charm, swim in grottos and go cliff diving into the turquoise water, and eat fabulous local food along the water or sometimes in caves.

Matera is a town in Puglia that is supposed to be so unique and special to visit – it's pretty much entirely made of caves! It looks so cool and I really want to visit.

Go mainly for:

- Cinque Terre without the tourists or cost•
- Dreamy rocky beaches•
- Unique Matera•

SARDINIA AND SICILY

I'm rounding out the south of Italy with the two largest Italian islands – Sardinia and Sicily. I got to visit Sardinia in 2020 and LOVED IT! The beaches were the prettiest I've seen in Europe, and loved the more meat-focused fare over seafood (though you can definitely find lots of seafood too). Sardinia and Sicily are very similar in that they are large islands off the southeast coast of Italy. Throughout history they have been conquered and inhabited and re-conquered by so many different empires leading to a real mixing pot of culture and food. Both islands are known for their volcanic geology, amazing fresh food grown in

the fertile soil and caught in the sea (mainly seafood, especially in Sicily), stunning beaches, and laid-back culture.

If you want to decide which one to go to – here's what I found. Since Sicily is closer to Africa, it can get suuuuper hot in the summer (July or August) and would not be a nice place to visit that time of year. They also have jellyfish in the water making it not advisable to get in during this time of year. Because of the southern location, the weather is pretty idyllic even in the winter so if you wanted a winter vacation outside of late May to September, this could be a good spot. Sardinia is further North and has crosswinds that make it bearable in the summer but possibly too cold outside of those months.

The beaches in Sardinia look to be maybe the most stunning in all of Europe with white sand beaches and turquoise waters while still having that rocky/craggy coast vibe that I love about the Mediterranean.

Check out **this travel guide** I found for a great itinerary and beautiful pictures. Sicily also has pretty beaches but they are smaller and more cove-like.

Sicily beats out Sardinia in culture because of all the empires that have left their mark on the island. It is the largest island in Italy and you could spend a couple weeks there just exploring it.

It's good to note that because these islands are so large, it would be kind of pointless to just spend a couple days here – you would definitely want to explore more of the islands.

Go mainly for:

- Culture in Sicily•
- Caribbean meets Med beaches in Sardinia•
- Super fresh food•







WHAT TIME OF YEAR SHOULD I VISIT ITALY?

I think it depends on where you are going as Italy could technically be beautiful year round. If you are just looking for the culture of big cities like Rome or Florence and don't want to spend a ton of money, the off season (November – February) could save you a lot of money. I also do not recommend visiting anywhere that doesn't involve beaches and water in July or August as it's just too hot. You will melt! The Italians also flee the mainland for the coast during this time period so a lot of local shops and restaurants are closed.

The best time of year to visit would definitely be the shoulder season of March – May and September – October, especially if you aren't planning on getting in the water or visiting beaches.

IS THERE A LANGUAGE BARRIER IN ITALY?

If you stick to the top destinations, everyone will speak English because they are used to the tourists. If you visit some off the radar locations like the Dolomites, Piedmont, Puglia, or any of the islands you might have a hard time communicating. Just practice your pointing and miming and you should be able to get by.

With the Italians, knowing a few phrases and words will always make them kinder to you. So do a couple **Coffee Break Italian podcasts** – my new favourite language learning.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR ITALY?

Just wear whatever you find comfortable for sightseeing – I usually go for sundresses / skirts and t-shirts with sneakers or sandals. On the islands make sure to bring tennis shoes if you want to do some hiking.

In the colder months, jeans and sneakers are perfectly acceptable. Literally everyone wears sneakers with everything. In the ritzier destinations, feel free to dress up a bit!

WHAT SOUVENIRS SHOULD I BUY IN ITALY?

My favorite place to get souvenirs was in the **Amalfi Coast**. I got homemade shoes, lemon things, pottery, linen clothing, etc. Tuscany is a great place to buy wine if you have a way to pack it and take it home but you can also ship it home for less than 100€. In Tuscany you can also get other foodie items like truffle honey, pesto, etc. I would say the biggest things you will be tempted to buy are linens, clothes, pottery, and wine.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

You will most likely be flying in for a week or two week long trip. If you are exploring the north of Italy, the cheapest and easiest places to fly into are probably going to be Rome, Venice, or Milan. Florence is always very expensive so I assume it has a tiny airport. If you want to explore the south of Italy, your cheapest and easiest options are Rome or Naples.

Once you get to Italy, you can catch a regional flight for very cheap to other cities or you can take the train (or rent a car).

If you want to see what the cheapest flights are from your city, use Google Flights Explorer. You can type in some dates, from your city, and to “Italy”. The map will show you prices for all over. You can filter more for times and stops – it’s the best.

If you are ready to start planning your trip – check out my travel resources on [how to book a trip step by step](#) and [how to pack in a carry-on](#).

[Use Google Flights to book your flight](#)

SOME ROUTE OPTIONS

Ones I have done in the past and plan to do in the future:

One week: 3 nights in Rome – 1 night in Naples – 2 nights in Amalfi – 1 night in Positano – 1 night in Rome

One week: 4 nights in the Dolomites – 3 nights in Lake Garda – 1 night in Venice

NORTHERN ITALY OPTIONS:

Of course the more time you can spare the better. These all assume you have 8ish nights in the country which is like flying out of the US on a Friday and returning on Sunday. Also note that it is a perfectly reasonable thing to do to spend more than 3 days in any of these places, I am just showing what I think the minimum time is.

When you just want some culture: 2 nights in Venice – 3 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Rome

When you want culture and country: 2 nights in Venice – 3 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Tuscany OR 3 nights in Rome – 3 nights in Tuscany – 2 nights in Florence

When you want culture and water: 2 nights in Venice – 2/3 nights in Lake Garda or Como or Cinque Terre – 3 nights in Florence OR 3 nights in Rome – 2 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Cinque Terre or Lake Como

When you want country and water: 3 nights in Lake Como – 3 nights in Cinque Terre – 3 nights in Tuscany

Northern Italy greatest hits: 3 nights in Rome – 3 nights in Tuscany – 3 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Cinque Terre – 3 nights in Lake Como or Lake Garda – 2 nights in Venice

Northern Italy off the beaten path: 2 nights in Venice – 2 to 5 nights in Lake Garda and the Dolomites – possible 2 night culinary stop in Parma – 3 to 4 nights in Piedmont

SOUTHERN ITALY OPTIONS:

Greatest hits: 3 nights in Rome – 3 nights in the Amalfi Coast – 2 nights in Ischia or Capri – 1 night in Naples or Rome to fly home

Give me all the beaches and a little culture: 3 nights in Rome – 3 nights in the Amalfi Coast – 3 nights in Sardinia/Sicily

Just straight up beaches: 3 nights in Sicily/Sardinia – 3 nights in the Amalfi Coast – 3 nights in Puglia

ALL OF ITALY:

The basicest of the bitchest (no shame): 2 nights in Venice – 3 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Rome – 3 nights in the Amalfi Coast – 1 night in Naples or Rome to fly home

A full Italian tour: 2 nights in Venice – 3 nights in Dolomites – 1 night in Milan – 3 nights on Lake Como – 3 nights in Cinque Terre – 3 nights in Florence – 3 nights in Tuscany – 3 nights in Rome – 1 night in Naples – 3 nights in the Amalfi Coast – 3 nights in Puglia or Sardinia or Sicily