

Your Easy Guide to Electronics and Currency

To make sure your experience is seamless, here's a simple guide on what you need to know about powering your devices in Italy and buying things while you're there.

Adapters and Voltage

- US plugs won't fit the wall sockets in Italy. You must bring one or two European Travel Plug Adapters (which fit Type F or Type L sockets). Although it's good to buy them in the US, you can find them everywhere in Rome, and within seconds of your hotel.
- American devices run on 110-120 volts, but Italy uses 220-240 volts.
 - Phones, Laptops, Tablets: Most chargers for these are dual-voltage and can handle the higher 220-240 volts.
 - Simple Appliances (Curling Iron or Hair Dryer): Appliances that are not dual-voltage will be damaged if plugged directly into the higher voltage. The easiest solution is to buy a dual-voltage travel appliance.

Cords and Charging Multiple Devices

- You do not need special USB or Lightning cables. Your regular charging cords plug into the wall charger you already own.
- To charge several devices at once using just one wall adapter, pack a small, basic US power strip. Plug your US devices into the strip, and then plug the strip into your single European adapter. This way, one adapter powers everything.

Currency: Paying for Things in Rome

Italy uses the Euro (€), and you'll want a mix of cash and cards for smooth transactions.

Cards vs. Cash

- Credit/Debit Cards: Major establishments like hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions accept Visa and Mastercard. It's always a good idea to bring at least two different cards in case one is lost or blocked.
- Cash (Euros): Cash is good for smaller daily transactions, such as buying gelato, purchasing snacks, or paying for small items at cafes. Always carry some small Euro bills (€5, €10, €20) with you.

Getting and Using Euros

- The most secure way to get Euros is by withdrawing them from a Bancomat (the Italian word for ATM). Use ATMs attached to major banks (like UniCredit) for the best exchange rate and security. Avoid currency exchange kiosks, as their rates are often very high.
- Before you leave, call your bank and credit card companies to let them know the exact dates you will be in Italy. In fact, you can get Euros from your US bank before going to Rome. Just be sure to notify them 2 weeks in advance to ensure it arrives before you go.
- Ask your bank if your cards charge foreign transaction fees (usually 1% to 3% of every purchase). If they do, using cash more often will save you money.

Tipping

- Tipping customs in Italy are different. In restaurants, a service charge (*servizio incluso*) is often included in the bill. If the service was good and a charge wasn't already included, simply round up the bill or leave a few extra Euros (1 to €3 per person) on the table. You are not expected to leave a 15% or 20% tip.

