Accommodation/lodging in Italy

Accommodation for youngsters in Italy is not always easy to find. This is mainly the case because young people tend to live with their families until they earn a stable salary or marry. Recently things have begun to change though, and it is becoming more common for university students to share flats. It remains however the safest way to refer to your hosting organisation to organise lodging rather than leaving this to the responsibility of the trainee. Most commonly for short stays such as transnational work placements, lodging will be organised in families or in student accommodation if it takes place over the summer months.

To find shared student accommodation: Refer to advertisements in local newspapers where “bed sits” are advertised by landlords. Prices vary between 150 – 200 Euros for a shared room, and 250 – 300 Euros for a single room in a shared flat. Prices vary between North and South, the North being generally more expensive.

Via the Internet, advertisements can be searched (in Italian only) on the following sites:

- www.informagiovani.it - a general site with much useful information on all aspects of life in Italy for youngsters.
- www.studenti.it - a site for students, concerned with all information with respect to student life, where students also put advertisements for shared flats.
- www.ostellionline.org/ in Italian and English – a site containing all youth hostels in Italy (and also abroad) with the possibility for on-line booking.
- www.venere.com in various languages – a site for holiday accommodation (hotels, bed & breakfast, apartments) with the possibility of on-line booking for some.
- www.italiantourism.com/accomod.html - a site that gives general information on accommodation and links to hotels.

“Italy is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life.”

Anna Akkmatova
Social life

The distinguishing feature about Italian social life is the high value that is given to family and friendship. Italians like to mingle and need personal contact, perhaps more than other people. You will notice that Italians always go out in large groups. As a foreigner, you can therefore be sure that if you have managed to make friends with one person, you have made friends with 10. All this also explains why the mobile phone is such an essential gadget in daily life: it helps to keep in touch!

Italians as they see themselves

Many Italians do not like being stereotyped and feel themselves culturally more represented by their own town, which may represent much more their own identity than Italy as a country. You will notice for example that Italians very much identify with the region of their parents even when they moved away years ago – a child of Sicilian parents who may have moved to Turin 30 years before, will still say that he is Sicilian and not Piedmontese!

Meeting Italians

Italians are open-minded and in this point the stereotype is true in reality. Even when they complain about themselves that they are closed, this is a very relative statement when compared to the Northern European mentality. In general Italians are happy to meet people and curious about foreigners. So, when they discover you are from abroad and working in Italy, they are usually enthusiastic and will ask you about your own country and how you like theirs. This is a good starting point to meet people.