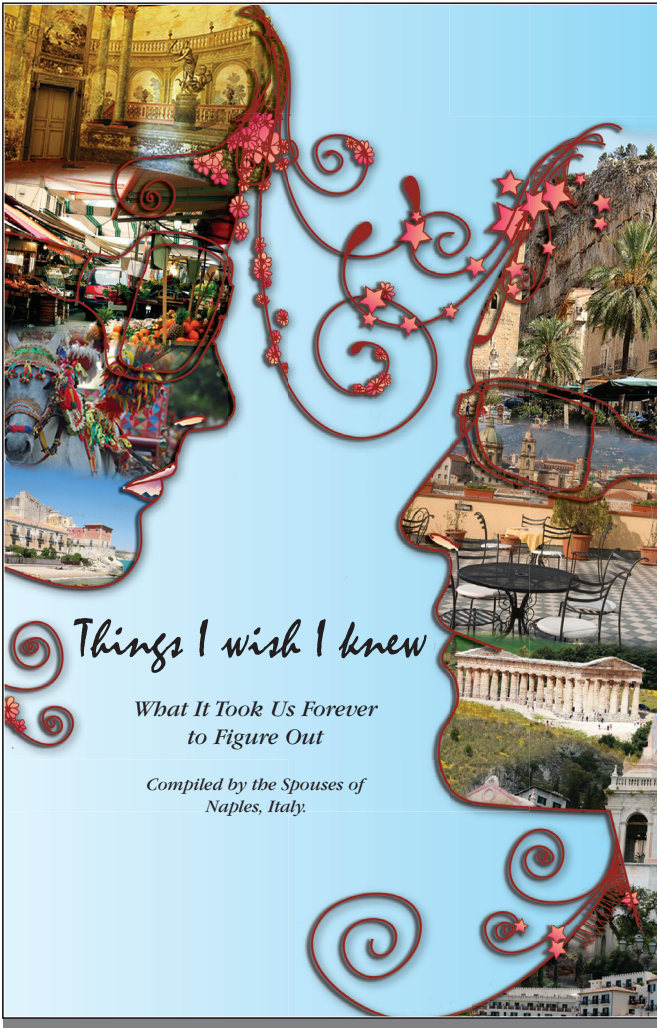
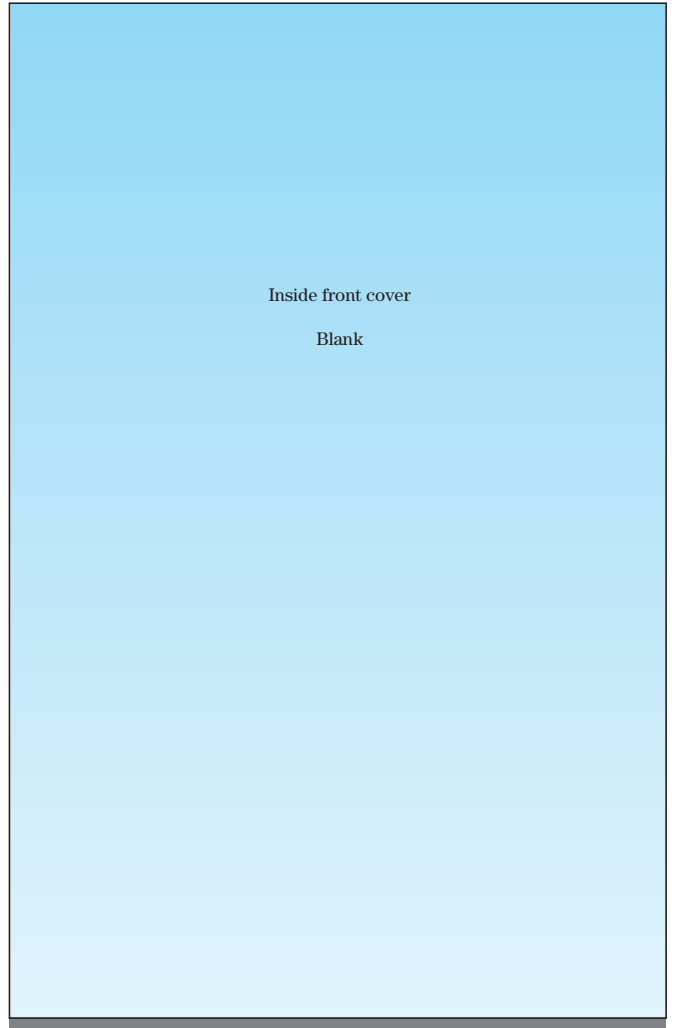


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## Benvenuti in Italia!

*Moving to Europe often involves getting used to different ways of doing things. This list was compiled by our SOCEUR spouses, in the hopes that you will never have to say, as so many of us have, "Gosh, I wish I'd known that!"*

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**Disclaimer**  
 This guide is made up of notes and suggestions for making life overseas a little easier and more enjoyable. Some things we learned the hard way, and we hope what we've learned will be helpful to you. However, we are not experts, and all information is based on our own personal experiences.

## Things I wish I knew about Italy

### All Things Automotive

(Driving, Parking and Fueling)

The gas coupons have an expiration date, but you can sell them back at the Navy Exchange and purchase new coupons. It is a good idea to watch the date closely because there can be a long line when it comes time to sell them back.

On-street parking usually requires payment as well. Look for a nearby metal box mounted on a pole where you can purchase your ticket. You must buy a ticket (good only for a certain amount of time; stated on both the machine and ticket) and place it in the window of your vehicle BEFORE you go to dine, shop, etc. If you don't have one, or if it expires, you can be ticketed. This is why it is a good idea to always have Euro coins with you.

Stay out of the left lane unless you are passing; in Italy, the left lane really is for passing only. If a car behind you is flashing its lights they are trying to tell you to move to the right so they can pass.

The base Exchange does sell GPS's and I would recommend picking one up. You can buy one in the states before you PCS (it may be less expensive there) and get the European map disks (if they are not included) as well. Depending on the brand you choose, you may also be able to download maps online.

If you purchase a used car here, especially from another military family who is PCS'ing, remember that many of

these cars have European specifications. Two indicators are the speedometer and the gas gauge. If the speedometer is in kilometers or the gas gauge is measured in liters, the car has European specifications. These cars cannot be taken back to the US without a (usually expensive) conversion. If the car has U.S. specs, you can take it back to the States.

Talking on your cell phone while driving is illegal on and off base.

Always carry both your U.S. and Italian translation driver's licenses with you.

You can register up to 3 (50cc and up) vehicles and 1 (49cc and below) motor scooter. The registration fee for each is 20 Euro. After that you do not need to re-register the vehicles but you will have to pay road tax on all non-primary vehicles.

If the Carabinieri wave their red "lollypop" at you as you drive by, make sure you STOP! Police here have different rules and may react in a more forceful manner than American police.



### Transportation

(Trains and Planes)

I wish I had known how easy it was to take the train to Rome. The first couple of times I drove up and hit a ton of traffic. The train was inexpensive, took the same amount of time, and was a lot less stressful.

The web-site easyjet.com is a great way to fly throughout Europe. The tickets are as low as I have ever seen.



### Shopping

Shipping to and from the States can be expensive and time consuming. Christmas cards and packages nearly always need to be mailed a week or two before Thanksgiving. The Post Office publishes a "Mail By" guide every year with the dates by which packages must be mailed to get to the U.S. for Christmas. Also, consider shipping time when ordering gifts that you want to have here before the holidays. For gifts to stateside family and friends consider ordering online and shipping directly to the recipient; it could save you time and money.

If you go shopping in a store that uses shopping carts, you must have a 1 Euro coin to unlock the cart. You get the coin back when you return the cart and lock it in with the rest.

Always carry Euros! Italy is essentially a cash economy. Many Italian grocery stores, smaller stores, bars and restaurants do not take credit cards.

For Army, Marine and Air Force service members, you may want to visit your Uniform Shop before coming to Naples. AAFES Clothing Sales has a very limited selection of items for services other than Navy. If the shop is sold out of a particular item they will order replacement items for you. However, special orders (items they do not currently keep in stock) must be placed on-line.

Online shopping can be a great way to get things that are hard to find and/or expensive in Europe; however, check shipping and handling costs before you order. Also, make sure the company ships to FPO addresses before filling your "cart".

Many Italian grocery stores, do not give out shopping bags. They do offer plastic bags but you must purchase them. The commissary sells cloth bags which are great on and off base. These bags are also very useful at flea markets.

Leroy Merlin is very similar to Home Depot in the States. Auchan is a giant mall with a grocery store. It is similar to a Wal-Mart.

Most towns have at least a weekly open-air market from spring until fall; some are year-round. Fresh vegetables, flowers, meat, cheese, wine and other local specialties are only some of what is available.

You may use any Italian bank (Bankomat/ATM) that takes your ATM card to get Euros. Exchange rates are not created equal; Italian banks typically offer an exchange rate that is slightly better than what you get at an American

bank. If you are making a big purchase or if you pay your monthly bills in Euros, using the Italian ATM machines may save you some money.

Do not rely on the NEX for all sporting goods. The Marathon stores have a nice selection of sports items. You also may want to consider ordering online if there is a specific brand or style you need. Whatever you decide to do, we suggest that you do not wait until the last minute to purchase your child's sports supplies.

The Navy Exchange has a limited supply and selection of Halloween costumes. You may want to consider ordering online as early as September.

If your child has his or her heart set on a particular themed birthday party, the supplies may not be available here. This is another thing you may want to order online, and early.



## Schools

If you would like to continue or start your college education, NSA hosts 5 colleges: University of Maryland University College, University of Phoenix, Central Texas College, Oklahoma University, and Embry Riddle. Employment opportunities can be difficult to come by for spouses so continuing your education is a great way to spend your time in Italy.

Some colleges to consider are listed below:

University of Oklahoma  
apnaples@ou.edu  
39-081-568-6672  
Two Master degree programs

University of Phoenix  
Ali.rockwell@phoenix.edu  
39-081-568-6670  
MBA and Master of Arts in Education

Central Texas College  
naples@europe.ctcd.edu  
39-081-568-6761  
Associates degrees

UMUC  
napl@ed.umuc.edu  
39-081-568-6675  
Associates, Bachelors, and Masters

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University  
www.embryriddle.edu/ec  
39-081-568-4364  
Certificates, Associates, Bachelors, & Masters

There is a new program for active duty, activated Guard and Reserve Service Members spouses. The program is called Military Spouse Career Advancement Account Program (MyCAA). It offers up to \$3,000 per year, for 2 years, for a total of \$6,000 which does not need to be paid back. Spouses can enroll in the program through Military OneSource by visiting [aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa/](http://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa/).

After spouses have completed an on-line profile, they should call the Military OneSource Career and Education Consultants (1-800-342-9647) for additional guidance. MSCAAP Consultants are available to speak with spouses between 7:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M. EST, Monday through Friday. (NOTE: Naples is not listed as a separate site on the web. Applicants should check "All" and then check "Other" in the appropriate place.)

You can pre-register your child in the Child Development Center, the Elementary and the High Schools before leaving the States. The following site [naples.eu.dodea.edu/registration.htm](http://naples.eu.dodea.edu/registration.htm) will take you to the Naples school system home page. Click on the Pre-Registration link and follow the instructions. To add your child to the CDC waiting list check out the following site [www.mwr.navy.mil](http://www.mwr.navy.mil). Once

there click on Child Youth Programs-Europe and then click on Naples.

The High school in Naples does offer National Junior Honors Society. If your child was in advanced placement classes in the states they will most likely be able to continue them here.



## Around the House

If you use transformers, turn them off when not in use, as they pull a lot of power.

U.S. digital alarm clocks, that are plug-in and not battery-operated, will not keep correct time here, as the cycles are different.

Most Italian windows do not use curtain rods that are common in the U.S. (this is true for most on-post housing as well). The walls in Italian houses, as well as in on-base housing, are a cement type rather than dry wall construction. If you want to put up curtain rods, you may need permission from your landlord, as you will likely have to drill holes and use screw anchors to put them up. Also, most U.S. curtains will not be long enough for Italian windows.

You will have to decide for yourself what works best for your family when it comes to your 110V appliances and items such as grills and Christmas lights. On-base housing units have 110V outlets throughout the whole apartment, but off-post housing does not. Also, certain 110V appliances, when used with a



transformer, either use more power than you may want to pay for, or will not work correctly (microwaves, for example) because of cycle differences. In some cases, buying Italian appliances can be more cost-effective in the long run. Only gas grills are permitted in base housing.

Check the Forgotten Treasures Thrift Shop on Support Site before buying new Italian appliances or transformers. Many people who are PCS'ing will donate their Italian appliances before they leave, and you may find what you need at a very good price. There is also an electronic classified ads available: [www.naplesallhands.com](http://www.naplesallhands.com)

Just as with any military move, make sure you have an accurate list, photos or videos of your household goods, and receipts and appraisals for your valuables. Appraisals are important for full replacement value for damaged items, especially those you have had for some time; prices may have gone up significantly since you purchased them.

Please note that in writing money amounts, Europeans use a comma where we use a period and a period where we use a comma. For example, \$35.00 is

€35,00. \$35,000 is €35.000. You do not want to make this mistake when paying your bills.

If you live on the economy and request them, the Housing Office will provide you with 240V fridge/freezer, washer and dryer, microwave, and fans.

The water in this area is quite hard, and calcium deposits build up very quickly. You should use an additive in your dishwasher along with your dishwasher soap. "Somat" is the popular brand, and can be found in the commissary as well as locally.

When you live out in the economy the houses do not have closets. The housing office will supply 2 wardrobes for the service member and 1 wardrobe for each additional family member. We found out really quickly how fast those fill up. It is a good idea to make sure you have large dressers or purchase portable clothing racks before you leave the states.

The base now has a direct assignment to government housing policy. This means if you are coming with a family then you will live on base. The base housing can be smaller than you are accustomed so you may want to slim down your

household goods shipment. Each apartment does have its own storage unit but they are not that big. Try to judge what you really need and what you can leave in permanent storage back in the states.



### Pets

Naples now allows dogs in government quarters. You can have 2 pets (2 cats/ 2 dogs) but they must be less than 70 pounds each. There are also certain dog breed restrictions. The following breeds are not permitted in base housing: Pit Bulls (American Stafford Bull Terrier or English Stafford Bull Terrier), Rottweilers, Doberman Pinschers, and wolf hybrids. This does included any mixes of those breeds.

Just because you and your family get a seat on the AMC flight does not guaranteed a spot for your pets. You have to call in advance and reserve a spot. If you cannot get a spot, then you must send them on a commercial flight which can be very expensive. Plus, most commercial airlines have black-out days during the summer and they will not fly pets. Each airline has their own requirements to ship so make sure you ask your respective airline their rules and regulations.

Before your dog can come to Italy you must have a bi-lingual health certificate from the USDA, the rabies shots cannot be more than 1 year old and no less than 30 days old, and the dog must be micro-chipped. Getting all of this can take a long time so make sure you start early.



### Communication

You are issued a U.S. phone number which people in the States can dial as they would any stateside number.

If your computer is dual voltage, you can plug it into both 220v and 110v; the latter requires a plug adapter for 220v sockets. You will likely have to flip a switch (from 110v to 220v) on your computer before you turn it on. Do NOT forget to check this before powering up; otherwise, you can instantly fry your computer.

Appending your standard FPO AE address with "ITALY" or "NAPLES" can route inbound U.S. mail through the Italian Postal system and delay its otherwise timely delivery to you. To ensure the

fastest and most direct delivery, please encourage your stateside friends and family to only use the standard address you provide them without adding "ITALY" or "NAPLES."



### Health Care

In the states dependants are not entitled to use Navy dental but overseas families can receive dental care.

I was pregnant with my first child when we arrived in Italy. The pre-natal care I received was great; however, if I had been high-risk I would have had to go out in town to an Italian doctor.



## Travel and Entertainment

Whenever you are out and about, make sure you have small change (coins under 1 Euro) for the restrooms. You must pay before you can use the facilities.

Italians have a lot of festivals and they start later in the evening than you may be accustomed. Fireworks are usually the center piece to every celebration so don't be alarmed if you hear them at all hours of the night. The festivals are a great way to experience the Italian culture so make sure you take part.

It is always a good idea to purchase a couple of pocket size English – Italian dictionaries. I always keep one in my purse and one in my car. They have been more helpful than you can imagine.

## Speaking Italian

It is a good idea to learn basic Italian as soon as you can. Most community colleges in the states will offer courses. They really do help you build the basics before you arrive. NKO offers on-line language classes and the Fleet and Family Service Center also offers Basic Italian courses free of charge. It is a good way to begin. The University of Maryland University College also offers a Certificate, Associates, and Bachelors degrees in Italian Studies.

Translation websites can be helpful; several we have used are: [dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org), [www.freetranslation.com](http://www.freetranslation.com) and [www.babelfish.com](http://www.babelfish.com).



## In General

Take it one day at a time. Your first month will be a learning curve, but every day gets easier!

Establish a network of friends. It helps with the transition, as well as once you've gotten settled. Your sponsor and your Family Readiness Coordinator are great places to start.

The SOCEUR spouses have a monthly social from September to May. We meet at a restaurant, or at someone's home. This is a great way to meet other spouses in the command. Details are put out via our weekly SpouseNet News.

Have fun! Italy is a great place to live, with wonderful opportunities to travel and experience other cultures.



If you have suggestions or tips for living in Italy that you would like to share, we would be happy to include them in our next edition.

Please email: Karen Vezina  
Family Readiness Coordinator – SOCEUR  
[vezinak@eucom.mil](mailto:vezinak@eucom.mil)

*Arrivederci!*

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