



Italian by Lara

DR TERESA LARA PUGLIESE · A CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPANION

Italy Before You Go

Lesson One · One Country, Many Italies — The South

LESSON ONE · BENVENUTI

Buongiorno a tutti — e benvenuti!

Good morning, everyone — and welcome.

Your first sentence of Italian — already behind you.

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TYPE A NUMBER IN THE CHAT

How old is Italy?

Your instinct — no googling.

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1776

The United States declares
independence

1861

Italy becomes a united country

THE KEY

Italy in 1858

Three years before unification — not one country, but seven.

- Kingdom of the Two Sicilies — capital Naples
- Papal States — ruled from Rome
- Grand Duchy of Tuscany — Florence
- Lombardy-Venetia — under Austria
- Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia — Turin
- Duchies of Parma & Modena

Borders simplified for the journey ahead.



THE COURSE

Four Lessons, Four Italies

- I The South**
the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies — today
- 2 Rome**
the lands of the Popes
- 3 Tuscany**
where the Italian language was born
- 4 Venice**
the republic of the sea

One journey — from the South up to Venice.





PART I

The Greeks

Before Italy, there was Greece — Paestum, 6th century BC

8TH CENTURY BC

Magna Graecia

“Greater Greece”

Not a colony of Greece — **more** Greece: a bigger, bolder, wealthier Greece beyond the sea.



THE CITY OF THE SIREN

Naples, a Greek City

Parthenope → *Neapolis* → *Napoli*
the siren of the Odyssey “the New City” today

Under the historic center, the streets still follow the Greek grid — twenty-five centuries of layers on top.



BEFORE ANYONE SAID “ITALIA”

Enotria

the land of the trained vines

the olive · the alphabet · the vine

Vines still grow inside Pompeii today — the same land, the same grape.





PART II

The Romans

The first riviera, and the rules of wine

THE BAY OF NAPLES

The First Riviera

Emperors, senators, millionaires — seaside villas at Baiae, Capri, and along the coast.

Arriving, exhaling, and saying: *finally, the sea* — a two-thousand-year-old tradition.





AUGUST, 79 AD

Pompeii, a Stopped Clock

Bread still in the ovens

Election slogans on the walls

thermopolia — fast-food counters

Asleep under the ash for seventeen centuries — the digging began in 1748.

A RULE 2,500 YEARS OLD

Wine belongs to the table

convivium

Latin — “living together”: wine, food and conversation as one art

Even the *aperitivo* arrives with something to eat.

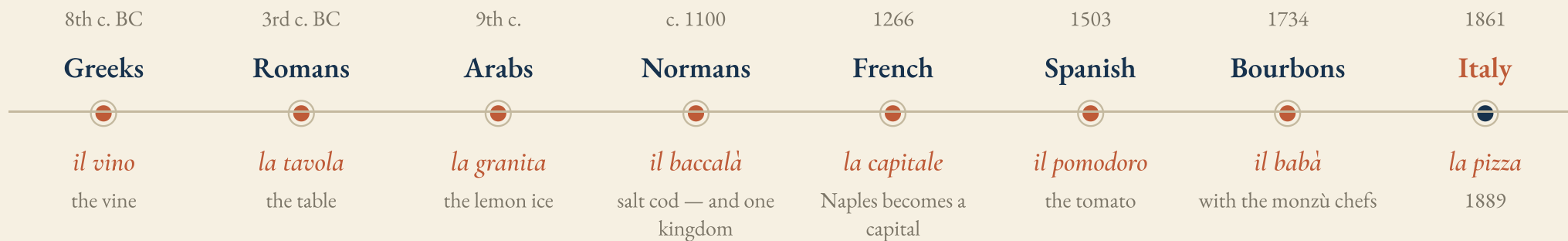
PART III

The Layers

In the South, history is on the menu.

THREE THOUSAND YEARS, ONE MENU

The Layers of the South



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LAYER ONE · 9TH CENTURY

The Arabs — Citrus and Ice

la granita al limone

Lemons and oranges arrived from the Arab world.

Flavored ice — *sharbat* — became sorbet, became granita.

A thousand years of history in a paper cup.



LAYER TWO · c. 1100

The Normans — One Kingdom

il Sud

the South

Sicily and the southern mainland — united into a single kingdom.

One kingdom for seven hundred and fifty years, while the North stayed a mosaic.

A country inside the country — because it was one.

And from the Norman north, still on every southern table: *il baccalà* — the salt cod they brought in the 11th century.

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LAYER THREE · ANGEVINS 1266 · THE BABÀ, 18TH CENTURY

The French — the Monzù and the Babà

il monzù

Neapolitan for “monsieur” — the French-trained chefs of the great palaces, from the 1700s

il babà

born at an exiled Polish king’s court in 1730s Lorraine — it reached Naples with the monzù around 1800, and never left

In Naples, “*you are a babà*” is a compliment — it means you are sweet, you are lovely.



LAYER FOUR · 16TH-17TH CENTURY

The Spanish — and the American Ingredient

il pomodoro

Before Columbus, Europe had never seen one.

It crossed the Atlantic with Spain — and landed in Spanish Naples.

The most Italian ingredient of all... is American.



THE LAST LAYER · 1734–1861

The Bourbons — the Last Kingdom

A European capital

Naples — with the San Carlo, one of the world's great opera houses

The first railway in Italy

Naples–Portici, ahead of the whole peninsula

Pompeii, unearthed

the Bourbon kings began the excavation in 1748

Then came **1861** — and after seven and a half centuries, the Two Sicilies joined the young Italy.

1889 · THE FLAG ON A PLATE

la pizza margherita

red tomato white mozzarella green basil

A Greek city. An American tomato. Local buffalo mozzarella.
Named for the queen of a nation eight years old.



A top-down view of a white ceramic cup filled with a frothy, golden-brown coffee. The cup sits on a matching white saucer. To the left of the cup are two dark chocolate eggs. To the right, a silver spoon rests on the saucer. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured background, possibly a marble table. The image has a soft, slightly desaturated aesthetic.

PART IV

Il caffè

Venice imported it. Naples made it a religion.

HOW THE CHURCH WORKS

The Rules of the Bar

al banco

Standing at the counter — three sips, ninety seconds, and on with the day.

al tavolo

Sitting costs more — you are renting the table and the view. Neither is wrong.

il cappuccino

A breakfast drink — milky coffees end at noon.
After meals: espresso only.

THE SOUTH, IN ONE GESTURE

il caffè sospeso

The suspended coffee: you drink one, you pay for two.

The second waits at the counter — an anonymous gift for a stranger who cannot afford it.

PART V · LA LINGUA — MY PROMISE

Read any Italian word.

Introduce yourself like an adult.

Andiamo!

THE PACT

One letter. One sound. *Always.*

though through tough tough

No silent surprises. No exceptions. Italian children learn to read in one year.

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EVERYTHING STANDS ON FIVE SOUNDS

The Five Vowels

A

open, like *father*

pasta

E

clean, like *bed*

espresso

I

“ee”, like *machine*

vino

O

round and clear

pomodoro

U

“oo”, like *flute*

prosciutto

Always open, always full, always the same.

THE DIGNITY RULE

Double Consonants Change the Word

anno year

ano the anus — one “n” changes everything

sette seven

sete thirst

The South’s doubles, on a plate: *pizza* *mozzarella* *caffè* *linger on the vowel before the double — the pause is the double.*

TWO SPECIAL SOUNDS — THE REST NEXT LESSON, IN ROME

Two Faces of the Letter C

C + H → HARD “K”

mi chiamo

my name is — literally “I call myself”. The H keeps the C hard.

C + E → SOFT, LIKE “CHURCH”

piacere

pleased to meet you — literally “pleasure”.

And lead with *lei*, the formal you: *piacere di conoscerla* — a grown, gracious guest, not a tourist on autopilot.

FOUR LINES — BUILT ONLY FROM SOUNDS YOU OWN

Your Introduction

Buongiorno, piacere di conoscerla.

Good morning, pleased to meet you.

Mi chiamo ...

My name is ... — your name goes here!

Vengo dagli Stati Uniti.

I come from the United States.

Sono americano / americana.

I am American — *-o* gentlemen, *-a* ladies.

CHOOSE THE LINES THAT ARE TRUE FOR YOU

Your Story Menu

Sono in pensione.

I am retired — in Italy, a respected status.

Ho origini italiane.

I have Italian roots — doors will fly open.

È la prima volta che vengo in Italia.

It's my first time in Italy — hear the hard *che*?

Mi piace molto l'Italia!

I really like Italy — the sentence that melts every Italian heart.

THE MAGIC WORD

vorrei

“I would like” — the velvet form.

Never *voglio* — “I want” sounds like a demanding child.

Pago con la carta.

I’ll pay by card — carries you through the whole trip.

TODAY’S MENU — THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH

Vorrei un caffè, per favore.

Venice imported it, Naples perfected it

Vorrei una pizza margherita, per favore.

the flag on a plate, 1889

Vorrei un babà, per favore.

the French-Neapolitan cake

Vorrei una granita al limone, per favore.

the Arab-Sicilian lemon ice

Vorrei un gelato, per favore.

needs no history — it is simply happiness

MICS OFF, VOICES ON — READ WITH ME

Ripetiamo insieme · i suoni

I say it — you repeat out loud at home. Nobody can hear you. Everybody is doing it.

1 · LE VOCALI

*pasta · espresso · vino ·
pomodoro · gelato · limone*

five vowels — always full, always open

2 · LE DOPPIE

*anno · sette · pizza · mozzarella ·
caffè · spaghetti*

linger on the vowel before the double

3 · I SALUTI

Buongiorno! / Buonasera! — good morning / good evening

Arrivederci! — goodbye

Grazie mille! — thank you so much

Prego! — you're welcome

Per favore — please

Va bene — all right

MICS OFF, VOICES ON — READ WITH ME

Ripetiamo insieme · le frasi

Your introduction, your story, your orders — out loud, at home.

4 · LA PRESENTAZIONE

Buongiorno, piacere di conoscerla. — pleased to meet you

Mi chiamo ... — my name is ...

Vengo dagli Stati Uniti. — I come from the US

Sono americano · americana. — I am American

Come si chiama? — and what is your name?

5 · LA TUA STORIA

Sono in pensione. — I am retired

Ho origini italiane. — I have Italian roots

È la prima volta che vengo in Italia. — my first time in Italy

Mi piace molto l'Italia! — I really like Italy!

6 · LE ORDINAZIONI

Vorrei un caffè e un babà, per favore. — I would like ..., please

Vorrei una granita al limone, per favore.

Vorrei una pizza margherita, per favore.

Pago con la carta. — I'll pay by card

Il conto, per favore. — the check, please

Un tavolo per due, per favore. — a table for two, please

ON STAGE — FOUR SCENES IN THE SOUTH

Adesso in scena!

I play the Italians. You play the traveler. Everything is written — if you can read four lines, you can act in my theater.

il bar . la gelateria . la pizzeria . piacere!

SCENE ONE *Il bar — un caffè e un babà*

☐ your lines

LARA *Buongiorno! Prego?* — what can I get you?

YOU *Buongiorno! Vorrei un caffè e un babà, per favore.*

LARA *Certo! Ecco a lei.* — of course! Here you are.

YOU *Grazie mille!*

LARA *Prego!* — you're welcome!

YOU *Pago con la carta.*

LARA *Va bene! Grazie, e arrivederci!*

YOU *Arrivederci!*

SCENE TWO *La gelateria — on the Amalfi Coast*

LARA *Buongiorno! Prego?*

YOU *Buongiorno! Vorrei un gelato, per favore.*

LARA *Certo! Ecco a lei il gelato.*

YOU *Grazie mille! Pago con la carta.*

LARA *Va bene! Arrivederci, e buona giornata! — have a lovely day!*

YOU *Grazie, arrivederci!*

Second volunteer: swap in una granita al limone — gelato is a “he”, granita is a “she”.

SCENE THREE *La pizzeria — the Queen's pizza*

LARA *Buonasera! Prego?* — good evening! Pizza is dinner food.

YOU *Buonasera! Vorrei una pizza margherita, per favore.*

LARA *Ottima scelta! La pizza della regina.* — excellent choice! The Queen's pizza.

YOU *Grazie mille!*

LARA *Ecco a lei! Buon appetito!*

YOU *Grazie! Pago con la carta.*

LARA *Va bene! Arrivederci!*

YOU *Arrivederci!*

SCENE FOUR · THE GRAND FINALE *Piacere! — meeting an Italian*

LARA *Buongiorno! Piacere, mi chiamo Lara.*

YOU *Buongiorno! Piacere di conoscerla. Mi chiamo ...*

LARA *Piacere mio! Di dov'è?* — the pleasure is mine! Where are you from?

YOU *Vengo dagli Stati Uniti. Sono americano / americana.*

LARA *Benvenuto in Italia!* — or Benvenuta, for a lady.

YOU — *your story: Sono in pensione. / Ho origini italiane. / È la prima volta che vengo in Italia.*
choose the lines that are true for you

LARA *Che bello! Davvero? Fantastico!* — how wonderful! Really? Fantastic!

YOU *Mi piace molto l'Italia!*

LARA *E l'Italia aspetta lei! Arrivederci!* — and Italy is waiting for you!

THE HIDDEN TRAP, REVEALED

Pay First, Drink Second

I *la cassa*

Go to the cash register first — order and pay there.



2 *lo scontrino*

Receive the little receipt — your ticket to the counter.



3 *al banco*

Take it to the counter and repeat your order to the barista.

And yes — *Pago con la carta* works perfectly at the cassa. By law, even for a single espresso.

Arrivederci!

Screenshot this slide — my website and email.

Dr Teresa Lara Pugliese

Questions? Write to me — I answer everyone personally.

NEXT · LESSON TWO — ROME, AND HOW TO
EAT LIKE A ROMAN

MY WEBSITE

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