



Italian by Lara

DR TERESA LARA PUGLIESE · A CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPANION

Rome, the Eternal Puzzle

Lesson Two · — and How to Eat Like a Roman

LESSON TWO · WELCOME BACK

Buongiorno a tutti — e bentornati!

Good morning, everyone — and welcome back.

benvenuti

welcome — last week



bentornati

welcome back — today

Italian is already starting to make sense.

WHERE WE ARE

The Map Returns

Italy in 1858 — seven states, seven old nations.

- Last week — the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies
- Today — the Papal States, and Roma

The strangest state of them all — ruled not by a king, but by **a priest**.



TYPE A YEAR IN THE CHAT

In what year did Rome
become the capital of Italy?

After last week, you are all experts — this should be easy.

MY LITTLE TRAP

Italy was born in 1861 — without Rome.

Imagine the United States declaring independence... without Washington. The most famous city in the world stayed outside the new Italy — the capital of **another country**.

1861

Torino

the first capital — in the far
northwest



1865

Firenze

the second capital — Florence



1870

Roma

nine years late — and that is today's
mystery

A NATION RULED BY A PRIEST

The Papal States

A band across the middle of the peninsula — from Rome up through Umbria, almost to Venice.

Its own army. Its own money. Its own laws.

An absolute monarch — **the Pope**.

For more than a thousand years.

Today's lesson is a mystery story.

How did the most famous city on Earth end up belonging to a Pope — and how did Italy get it back?





PART I

The Wolf, the Kings, the Republic

A hill above the Tiber, twenty-eight centuries ago

753 BEFORE CHRIST — SO THE LEGEND SAYS

Two Brothers and a She-Wolf

Romulus and Remus — twin sons of the god of war, abandoned on the banks of the Tiber, nursed by a she-wolf.

They argued about where to found their city. The argument ended the Roman way: Romulus killed Remus — and named the city after himself.

“We are the children of war, raised by a wild animal — and we do not lose arguments.” That self-image built an empire.

THE REAL BEGINNING

A village of shepherds' huts on the *Palatine hill* — archaeologists found the post-holes.

You will stand on that very hill.

c. 509 BC — NEVER AGAIN A KING

Something new in the world

res publica “the public thing” — the Republic

Elected officials. A Senate of elders. Term limits, vetoes, checks and balances. Sound familiar? It should.

Your Senate sits on **Capitol Hill** — named after the Capitoline Hill of Rome. The Forum is, in a very real sense, *the grandmother of Washington, D.C.*

THE PROBLEM THAT DESTROYS REPUBLICS

Julius Caesar

alea iacta est

“the die is cast” — crossing the Rubicon, 49 BC

The Ides of March, 44 BC — stabbed by the senators in the name of the Republic. You know the scene; Shakespeare wrote it.

Twenty centuries later, people still leave fresh flowers where he was cremated. In Rome, even the murdered dictators still get flowers.





PART II

The Empire

The first city of a million

SOMETHING NO CITY HAD EVER BEEN

The First City of a Million

I,000,000

people — two thousand years ago

After Rome fell, no city in Europe matched it until **London**,
around 1800. Seventeen centuries — nobody.

II aqueducts

one of them still feeds the Trevi Fountain today

50,000 miles

of paved roads — all, quite literally, leading to
Rome

I golden milestone

in the Forum — the marked center of the world

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OPENED IN THE YEAR 80

The Colosseum

50,000 spectators — a modern stadium's size

76 numbered entrances — filled and emptied in minutes

Admission: free — a gift from the emperor

Not a ruin of a barbaric age — *the most honest building in Rome*: bread and circuses for a city of a million.

REBUILT c. 126 — A TEMPLE TO ALL THE GODS

The Pantheon

l'oculo

the single round eye, open to the sky

A concrete dome **43 meters** wide — the world's largest for **1,300 years**.

Still the largest **unreinforced concrete** dome ever built. Michelangelo studied it.

Rain falls through the open eye — and Roman drains, still working, carry it away.



ONE LANGUAGE FOR A MILLION PEOPLE

Latin is not dead. You are learning it.

bonum diurnum → *buongiorno*

Latin — “a good day”

Italian — twenty centuries later, relaxed

How Latin became Italian — next week, in Tuscany. Another mystery for another lesson.



Claude Lorrain, 1636 — cows grazing in the Roman Forum

THE YEAR 476 — THE EMPIRE SIMPLY...
STOPPED

Cows in the Forum

~~1,000,000~~ → 30,000

The aqueducts were cut; the hills emptied; grass grew in the streets.

The center of the world became *il Campo Vaccino* — the cow field.

The marble became a quarry — the holes in the Colosseum's walls are where the bronze clamps were dug out.

Who rebuilt Rome? Not an emperor. A bishop.

An aerial photograph of St. Peter's Square in Rome, Italy. The square is a large, elliptical plaza with a central obelisk and a radial pattern of paving stones. It is surrounded by a two-story colonnade of Corinthian columns. In the background, the Via della Conciliazione leads to the Tiber River and the historic city of Rome, with the Vatican Museums and the Castel Sant'Angelo visible in the distance.

PART III

The Second Rome

City of the Popes — and Bernini's open arms

THIS CONCERNS YOU PERSONALLY

The pilgrims were the **first tourists** in history

From England, from Germany, from France — weeks and months on foot — to pray at the tomb of Peter, the apostle buried on the Vatican hill.

The first people to travel enormous distances not for war, not for trade — **for the experience**. Inns, guides, souvenirs: mass tourism, invented in Rome.

Your journey is the direct descendant of theirs — same roads, same city, better shoes.

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1300 · THE FIRST HOLY YEAR

The Jubilee — *il Giubileo*

200,000

pilgrims came that year — in a Europe where the biggest cities held fifty thousand

Two lanes

the bridge to Saint Peter's, divided down the middle — traffic lanes, invented for pilgrims

Dante

the eyewitness — he put the scene straight into the Divine Comedy. We meet him next week.

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THE SECRET OF THE POSTCARDS

The Rome You Will See Is Papal Rome

Saint Peter's — begun 1506, the largest church in the world, built in part with stones from the Colosseum

The Sistine Chapel — Michelangelo, four years on his scaffolding

Bernini's colonnades — two great curving arms, welcoming the pilgrim in

The Trevi Fountain — fed, remember, by a repaired ancient aqueduct

A theater of wonder — the greatest advertising campaign in history, in marble.



THE MYSTERY SOLVED

September 20, 1870

la breccia

Italian artillery opens a breach in the ancient walls, next to the gate called Porta Pia

the Pope withdraws

declaring himself a prisoner, behind the walls of the Vatican — after more than a thousand years, the state of the Popes is gone

Roma italiana

Rome is Italian. The map of 1858 is complete at last — nine years late.

1929 · REMEMBER OUR RULE — NOTHING EVER
DISAPPEARS

The Last Survivor of the Map

Città del Vaticano

44 hectares — the smallest sovereign state on Earth, smaller than many American farms

Its own passports, its own stamps — and Swiss Guards in Renaissance stripes

Crossing Saint Peter's Square, you walk on foot across an international border.

The seven Italies are down to one... *plus forty-four hectares.*



A top-down photograph of a black plate filled with spaghetti carbonara. The spaghetti is coated in a creamy sauce, topped with small pieces of cooked bacon and a generous amount of finely grated white cheese. The plate is set on a light-colored wooden table, and some cheese has spilled onto the table surface. In the top left corner, a small portion of a dark wooden bowl is visible.

PART IV

La tavola romana

The liturgy of the meal — and the cooking of Rome

A CEREMONY WITH AN UNCHANGEABLE ORDER

The Grammar of the Italian Table

1

l'antipasto

“before the meal” —
cured meats, cheeses,
fried artichokes



2 · THE TRAP

il primo

NOT the appetizer —
the pasta, a whole
course of its own



3 · TRAP TWO

il secondo

meat or fish — it arrives
alone; vegetables, *il*
contorno, are ordered
separately



4

il dolce

the sweet



5

il caffè

espresso — you know
the rule

Nobody orders all of it, every day — but the order never changes.

THEY WILL SAVE YOU THREE TIMES EACH

Three Unwritten Rules

il coperto

The cover charge — two or three euros each, for the bread, the tablecloth, the seat. Centuries old, legal, normal. Not a scam, not a tip.

la scarpetta

The bread comes without butter — always. Its noblest job: the “little shoe”, wiping the last sauce from your plate. In Rome, that is applause.

niente formaggio

Cheese never, ever goes on seafood pasta. If no parmesan is offered, the waiter has not forgotten — he is protecting you.

THE BEAUTIFUL PARADOX

The City of Popes Eats Like the Poor

la cucina povera

poor people's cooking — almost nothing, elevated by genius

cacio e pepe — pasta, pecorino, black pepper. Three ingredients — the hardest dish in the city to make perfectly.

l'amatriciana — tomato (our American friend!), cured pork cheek, pecorino.

la carbonara — the king. Eggs, pork cheek, pecorino, pepper. **No cream. Ever.**



ROME, 1944 · A STARVING, LIBERATED CITY

la carbonara

No recipe, no mention, no trace — before 1944. It appears exactly when the Allied armies arrive.

American rations — powdered eggs and bacon — met Roman genius, and pasta.

The most Roman dish of all may be half American — the tomato last week, the carbonara this week. You keep turning out to be part of this story.





FROM THE OLDEST ROMANS OF ALL

The Ghetto's Masterpiece

i carciofi alla giudia

Jewish-style artichokes — opened like a flower, fried until every leaf is a golden crisp

The Jewish community of Rome is the **most ancient in Western Europe** — here since before Julius Caesar.

Order them in season — and taste twenty-two centuries of Roman-Jewish history.

PART V · LA LINGUA — THE PROMISE KEPT

Unlock the entire menu.

Then order from it — on stage.

the silent H · the two faces of C — and of G · QU, the thirsty rule · the restaurant toolkit

Andiamo!

THE EASIEST RULE IN ITALIAN — H HAS NO SOUND. EVER.

The Silent H — and the Most Useful Sentence in Rome

Ho fame!

I am hungry — literally, “*I HAVE hunger*”

In Italian, hunger is not something you are — it is something you have. Like luggage.

ho sete

I am thirsty — its twin

H's two jobs: it hardens a C — *chiamo, che* — and it marks tiny words by sight: *ho*, spelled H-O, said simply “o”.

sete thirst, one T · *sette* seven, double T — one perfectly placed pause.

THE PROMISE KEPT — THE FULL RULEBOOK

The Two Faces of C

CA · CO · CU → HARD “K”

carbonara · contorno

and *cucina* — hear both faces:

CE · CI → SOFT, LIKE
“CHURCH”

piacere

you have known it since day one

CHE · CHI → HARD AGAIN

the H is the bodyguard

che — “keh” · *chiamo* — “KYAH-moh”

Now read, forever correctly: *bruschetta* *zucchine* *Chianti*

TODAY'S GIFT — SAME RULE, SECOND LETTER

G, the Twin Sister of C

GA · GO · GU → HARD

prego!

a hard G you have been saying since day
one

GE · GI → SOFT, LIKE
“GENTLE”

gelato · formaggio

and *buongiorno* — you followed the rule
without noticing

GHE · GHI → HARD AGAIN

spaghetti · funghi

— the same bodyguard H

One rule, two letters — carbonara, formaggio, bruschetta, spaghetti, funghi, gelato — the entire menu of Rome, unlocked.

QU IS ALWAYS “KW” — AND THE FIRST QUESTION AT EVERY TABLE

l'acqua

one of the very few Italian words with that little C-Q cluster — the waiter will be impressed you can even spell it

acqua naturale

still — the calm party

acqua frizzante

sparkling — the bubbles party

Decide today, once and for all, which side you are on. This is Italy — it may be the most important decision of your trip.

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THE WORD THAT MUST NEVER GO WRONG

pen·ne

The quill-shaped pasta of *penne all'arrabbiata*. With one N you are ordering... let me put it elegantly — a part of the male anatomy, in the plural, with spicy tomato sauce.

The waiter will remain professional. His eyes will not.

sete thirst · *sette*
seven

anno — two Ns when you give
your age

*the double consonant is the difference between dinner and a story your waiter
tells for years*

THE RESTAURANT TOOLKIT · I

Arriving Like a Roman

Buonasera! Un tavolo, per favore.

Good evening! A table, please.

Acqua naturale / frizzante, per favore.

The water question, answered — your side, your choice.

Un bicchiere di vino della casa.

A glass of the house wine — not the cheap option: the trattoria's own choice, often local, always honest. It marks you as someone who knows.

THE RESTAURANT TOOLKIT · II

Ordering — and Shining

Vorrei la carbonara, per favore.

the velvet word, back from last week — it never leaves

Che cos'è?

“what is it?” — point at the menu; the waiter performs the dish with full theater

Buonissimo!

when the food is glorious — and it will be

Il conto, per favore. · Pago con la carta.

the two lines you already own

Your entire Roman evening, beginning to end, in eleven short lines — and not one of them is above your level. This morning, your level went up.

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 · THE C WORDS

*carbonara · cucina · piacere ·
bruschetta · Chianti · zucchini*

both faces — and the bodyguard H

2 · THE G WORDS

*prego · gelato · buongiorno ·
formaggio · spaghetti · funghi*

the twin sister, same rule

3 · H AND HUNGER

Ho fame! · Ho sete! · Che cos'è?

the silent H, three ways

MICS OFF, VOICES ON — READ WITH ME

Ripetiamo insieme · le frasi

*The water, the doubles, and your whole Roman evening —
out loud, at home.*

4 · THE THIRSTY RULE

*acqua · acqua naturale · acqua
frizzante*

QU is always “kw”

5 · THE DOUBLES OF DESTINY

*penne · sette · sete · anno ·
spaghetti*

exaggerate the linger — the pause is the double

6 · THE TOOLKIT, LINE BY LINE

Buonasera! Un tavolo, per favore.

Acqua naturale, per favore.

Un bicchiere di vino della casa.

Vorrei la carbonara, per favore.

Buonissimo! · Il conto, per favore. · Pago con la carta.

ON STAGE — A ROMAN DINNER IN FOUR ACTS

Adesso in scena!

I play *la cameriera* — the waitress. You are diners in a trattoria in Rome. Everything is written; nothing to invent.

I · l'arrivo · II · l'ordinazione · III · che cos'è? · IV · il gran finale

ACT I *L'arrivo — arriving, and the water question*

☐ your lines

CAMERIERA *Buonasera! Benvenuti!*

YOU *Buonasera! Un tavolo, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Certo! Prego.* — of course! This way.

YOU *Grazie mille!*

CAMERIERA *Acqua naturale o frizzante?* — still or sparkling?

YOU *Acqua naturale, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Subito!* — right away!

Third volunteer, if keen: add “E un bicchiere di vino della casa, per favore.”

ACT II *L'ordinazione — ordering the primo*

CAMERIERA *Prego?*

YOU *Vorrei la carbonara, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Ottima scelta! La carbonara — il piatto di Roma!* — the dish of Rome!

YOU *E un bicchiere di vino della casa, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Certo! Vino e carbonara — perfetto!*

YOU *Grazie mille!*

Variants: la cacio e pepe · le penne all'arrabbiata — say PEN-ne beautifully, receive a standing ovation · l'amatriciana

ACT III *Che cos'è? — the mystery on the menu*

YOU

Che cos'è?

CAMERIERA

Sono i carciofi alla giudia — buonissimi! — Jewish-style artichokes, delicious!

YOU

Vorrei i carciofi, per favore!

CAMERIERA

Ottima scelta! Subito!

YOU

Grazie mille!

Second run — the mystery is “il tiramisù”: the pick-me-up, tirami-sù, literally PULL ME UP!

ACT IV · THE GRAND FINALE *Buonissimo, il caffè, il conto*

CAMERIERA *Tutto bene?* — everything good?

YOU *Buonissimo! Che buono!*

CAMERIERA *Un dolce? Un caffè?*

YOU *Un caffè, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Certo! Ecco a lei il caffè.*

YOU *Grazie! Il conto, per favore.*

CAMERIERA *Subito! Ecco a lei.*

YOU *Pago con la carta.*

CAMERIERA *Va bene! Grazie mille — e buonasera!*

YOU *Grazie, arrivederci!*

THE HIDDEN TRAP, REVEALED

The check will **never** come.

You could sit until midnight — the waiter will bring you a smile, maybe a little biscotto, but not the bill. Because in Italy, bringing the check uninvited means *“please leave”* — an insult.

This is not slow service. It is **respect**: the table is yours for the evening — the meal ends when **you** decide it ends.

Il conto, per favore.

catch the waiter's eye, say your line — and all is well. The relationship comes before the transaction.

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Arrivederci!

Screenshot this slide — my website and email.

Dr Teresa Lara Pugliese

Questions? Write to me — I answer everyone personally.

NEXT · LESSON THREE — TUSCANY: HOW
LATIN BECAME ITALIAN · TAGLIATELLE &
GNOCCHI

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