



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Trains- If you're planning to travel extensively by train throughout Europe, buy a Eurailpass before you leave home. They cannot be purchased in Europe. You can, as a foreigner, buy a ticket for unlimited train travel within Italy.

Second class tickets cost about 63% of first class. For day travel, a compartment in first class has six seats. The same space holds eight in second class. And it can be a bit crowded. In a couchette at night the first class compartment sleeps four while the second class has six beds stacked three high. The supplement for the couchette is the same in either case. Obviously, if traveling in a group of 5 or 6, a second class couchette makes more sense. The Wagon Lit is the comfortable way to take long train trips. However, that little room, together with the first class fare, costs about the same as a regular air ticket.

Supplements- There are extra charges for express and high speed trains. If buying a ticket good for unlimited travel, check on what supplements, taxes reservation fees etc., you will have to pay besides the flat rate.

Rome City Buses- One of Rome's best bargains. Paying can be a little complicated however because there are three systems of paying (or there were).

- Trams and some buses may still have a conductor at the rear who collects the fare and gives you a ticket.
- Most buses have machines at the rear, which validate tickets purchased in advance at tobacco shops. You can't pay on the bus.
- Some bus lines may still have machines that sell tickets on the bus, for the right change, but don't count on it.

In all cases you keep the ticket until you get off. No one takes it or checks it. However, inspectors occasionally board the bus and do spot checks. For those caught without a validated ticket, there's a big fine, payable on the spot. A tessera, or monthly pass can be purchased at the same tobacconist's shops. It's good for all 150 or more bus and tram lines in Rome for a calendar month (not 30 days from purchase). I believe there are also passes for shorter periods of time. Ask about them where you buy the tickets. Just remember not to get on a bus without a ticket, and once on it, remember to have the date stamped by the machine on board.

All city bus stops have signs indicating which lines stop there and what the major stops are along each route. The Tutta Citta' Section of the phone book has a complete description of each route, and in its description of museums and other attractions, it tells you which bus line goes to them.

Subway- The Rome Metro has two lines, with a total of 33 stations (maybe a few more by now), which connect at Termini Station. They link the Prati District with Cinecitta', EUR and intermediate points. Although terribly crowded at the central stations, it's the easiest way to get from one end of the city to the other.

Taxis- The metered cabs used to be yellow but since bright yellow cars couldn't be resold, it was decreed that they be white. They are not allowed to cruise for passengers so they stop at taxi stands in each neighborhood. You can find them there or call them by telephone. The numbers of all taxi stands are listed in the phone book. In addition to the rate on the meter there are supplements for baggage, Sunday and night service, and responding to a phone call. There is also a large supplement for trips to or from the airport. Add about a 20% tip to the total.
