

The No-BS Digital Nomad Italy Starter Checklist & 90-Day Exit Plan

Your roadmap from cubicle warrior to aperitivo professional

THE BRUTAL TRUTH STARTER CHECKLIST

Before You Even Think About Booking That Flight

Financial Reality Check

- ☐ Calculate 6 months of expenses (then add 30% for "Italy happens")
- ☐ Save your "Oh Shit" fund: €10,000 minimum
- ☐ Set up banking that won't screw you internationally (Charles Schwab, Capital One)
- ☐ Get a credit card with no foreign transaction fees
- ☐ Find an accountant who understands the phrase "digital nomad taxes"
- ☐ Accept that you'll pay taxes in two countries and wine won't fix it

Work Setup Audit

- ☐ Test working remotely for ONE FULL WEEK from cafes
- ☐ Survive a day with throttled internet (10 Mbps max)
- ☐ Take client calls at 2 AM (practice that time zone life)
- ☐ Backup everything to the cloud. Then backup the backup.
- ☐ Buy noise-canceling headphones (Italian construction is eternal)
- ☐ Get a VPN that actually works in Italy

The Paperwork Gauntlet

- ☐ Check passport expiration (needs 3+ years remaining)
- ☐ Start FBI background check (this takes forever)
- ☐ Gather 2-3 years of tax returns
- ☐ Collect client contracts and letters
- ☐ Get health insurance that covers "I ate too much pasta"
- ☐ Research which visa you're pretending to qualify for

Mental Preparation

- ☐ Practice saying "I work online" in 47 different ways
 - ☐ Lower your customer service expectations to subterranean levels
 - ☐ Accept that August doesn't exist in Italy
 - ☐ Prepare for loneliness between the pasta courses
 - ☐ Download meditation apps (you'll need them for bureaucracy)
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THE 90-DAY EXIT PLAN: FROM AMERICAN DREAM TO ITALIAN REALITY

T-MINUS 90 DAYS: THE COMMITMENT PHASE

"This is happening. Pour wine accordingly."

Week 1-2: Paperwork Sprint

- ☐ Order FBI background check (seriously, do this NOW)
- ☐ Schedule visa appointment at Italian consulate
- ☐ Start document translation process
- ☐ Create spreadsheet of requirements (you'll revise this 47 times)
- ☐ Cry once about the bureaucracy ahead

Week 3-4: Financial Lockdown

- ☐ Open that Charles Schwab account
- ☐ Set up Wise (formerly TransferWise) account
- ☐ Calculate real budget (rent + wine + therapy)
- ☐ Negotiate remote work agreements with clients
- ☐ Start tracking every expense obsessively

T-MINUS 60 DAYS: THE REALITY PHASE

"Oh shit, this is actually happening."

Week 5-6: Visa Submission Panic

- ☐ Submit visa application with 73 documents
- ☐ Prepare for consulate to request 12 more documents
- ☐ Get apostilles on everything
- ☐ Translate documents into Italian
- ☐ Practice your "I'm not stealing Italian jobs" speech

Week 7-8: Location Research

- ☐ Join every "Expats in [City]" Facebook group
- ☐ Research neighborhoods (proximity to wifi > proximity to monuments)
- ☐ Book initial Airbnb for first month
- ☐ Identify co-working spaces
- ☐ Map out the nearest hospitals (just in case)

T-MINUS 30 DAYS: THE PANIC PHASE

"What have I done? Also, where's my visa?"

Week 9-10: Logistics Frenzy

- ☐ Follow up on visa (prepare for radio silence)
- ☐ Book refundable flight (emphasis on refundable)
- ☐ Sell/store/donate your American life
- ☐ Ship essential work equipment
- ☐ Download offline maps of everything

Week 11-12: Final Preparations

- ☐ Get international phone plan
- ☐ Stock up on American medications
- ☐ Take photos of all important documents
- ☐ Tell clients your new "Italian office hours"
- ☐ Say goodbye to 2-day Amazon delivery
- ☐ Practice basic Italian phrases
- ☐ Accept that "piano piano" is now your life philosophy

T-MINUS 0: DEPARTURE DAY

"Airport bar? Don't mind if I do."

Final 72 Hours

- ☐ Visa in hand (hopefully)
 - ☐ Pack life into 2 suitcases
 - ☐ Bring copies of everything (Italians love paper)
 - ☐ Download entertainment for 15-hour journey
 - ☐ Exchange some euros
 - ☐ Take deep breath
 - ☐ Board plane
 - ☐ Order wine immediately
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THE FIRST WEEK SURVIVAL GUIDE

Days 1-2: Jetlag and Gelato

- ☐ Find SIM card (prepare for 3-hour process)
- ☐ Test that "excellent wifi" in your Airbnb (spoiler: it's not)
- ☐ Locate nearest reliable coffee bar
- ☐ Buy adapter collection
- ☐ Collapse from exhaustion

Days 3-4: Bureaucracy Begins

- ☐ Visit Questura for permesso appointment
- ☐ Realize you need 14 more documents
- ☐ Open bank account (bring snacks, this takes all day)
- ☐ Register with local comune
- ☐ Question all life choices

Days 5-7: Finding Your Rhythm

- ☐ Successfully complete first workday
 - ☐ Find backup internet locations
 - ☐ Attend first expat meetup
 - ☐ Navigate first minor crisis
 - ☐ Celebrate with aperitivo
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EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

When Shit Hits the Ventilatore:

1. **Internet Dies During Client Call**
 - Don't panic (they can smell fear)
 - Switch to phone hotspot immediately
 - Text client: "Technical difficulties, reconnecting"
 - Run to nearest hotel lobby
 - Blame "Italian infrastructure"
2. **Visa Gets Rejected**
 - Wine first, panic second
 - Call expensive immigration lawyer
 - Consider marriage options
 - Book trip to visa-friendly country
 - Regroup and try again
3. **Money Runs Out**
 - Stop eating out (tragic but necessary)
 - Activate emergency fund
 - Raise rates immediately
 - Consider teaching English
 - Book flight home (if necessary)

THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS

- Your first apartment will suck
 - Italian internet is not Silicon Valley fiber
 - You'll gain 10 pounds minimum
 - Loneliness is real between 2-5 PM
 - August is when Italy ghosts you
 - Your productivity will drop 30%
 - You'll still love it anyway
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FINAL WISDOM

Remember: Every successful expat started confused, overwhelmed, and slightly drunk on limoncello. The difference between dreamers and doers is a booked flight and unreasonable optimism.

Italy doesn't want perfect. Italy wants you to show up, try to speak the language badly, eat too much, complain about the bureaucracy, and fall in love anyway.

Now stop reading checklists and book that flight. Your aperitivo awaits.

Forza e coraggio!

Legal Disclaimer: This checklist is not legal, financial, or tax advice. It's the accumulated wisdom of people who've made these mistakes so you can make different ones. Consult professionals who wear suits and know actual laws. The author is not responsible for visa rejections, wifi failures, or life-changing happiness.

Download the full workbook at Exit-Strategies.com