

The "Ciao, Corporate America" Starter Checklist & 90-Day Exit Plan

Or: How to Trade Your Cubicle for Cappuccinos Without Ending Up Homeless in Rome

The Reality Check Starter Checklist

Complete this before you quit your job and burn your bridges

Financial Sanity Check

- ☐ **\$2,500+ monthly passive income secured** (*or enough savings to fake it for a year*)
- ☐ **\$25,000 emergency fund** (*because Italy will find creative ways to separate you from your money*)
- ☐ **6 months of bank statements showing consistent income** (*the consulate doesn't trust you either*)
- ☐ **Tax returns for 2 years** (*proving you're a productive member of society, or were*)
- ☐ **CPA letter if self-employed** (*someone official saying your money is real*)

Documents That Will Make You Cry

- ☐ **Passport valid for 3+ years** (*not 2 years and 11 months, they check*)
- ☐ **FBI background check** (*yes, they know about that thing in Vegas*)
- ☐ **Birth certificate** (*the long form, because of course*)
- ☐ **Apostilles for everything** (*Google it, then pour a drink*)
- ☐ **Professional translations** (*your high school Italian won't cut it*)

The "Oh Shit" Preparations

- ☐ **Health insurance that covers Italy** (*minimum €30,000 coverage*)
- ☐ **Proof of accommodation** (*the Catch-22 that breaks everyone*)
- ☐ **Italian language basics** (*at least learn to apologize properly*)
- ☐ **Scan everything to the cloud** (*when, not if, you lose documents*)
- ☐ **Power of attorney back home** (*someone needs to handle your American mess*)

Digital Nomad Essentials

- [] **Remote work contracts/client agreements** (*proving you won't steal Italian jobs*)
 - [] **VPN that actually works** (*for American Netflix and sanity*)
 - [] **International banking setup** (*Charles Schwab or similar*)
 - [] **Google Voice number** (*keep your US number without the fees*)
 - [] **Mail forwarding service** (*Earth Class Mail or similar*)
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The 90-Day "Burn the Ships" Timeline

Working backwards from your escape date

T-Minus 90 Days: The Commitment Phase

"This is really happening"

- [] Tell your boss you're leaving (*or don't, surprises are fun*)
- [] Start FBI background check process (*it takes forever*)
- [] Begin gathering documents (*prepare for bureaucratic hell*)
- [] Book reconnaissance trip to Italy (*don't skip this*)
- [] Start hardcore Italian lessons (*Duolingo won't save you*)
- [] Create budget based on REAL numbers (*then add 40%*)

T-Minus 75 Days: The Paperwork Nightmare Begins

"What fresh hell is this?"

- [] Order official copies of everything
- [] Start apostille process (*state-by-state suffering*)
- [] Research target cities seriously (*Instagram lies*)
- [] Begin downsizing possessions (*you can't take it with you*)
- [] Schedule consulate appointment (*good luck getting one*)
- [] Cry over Italian bureaucracy (*totally normal*)

T-Minus 60 Days: The Money Panic

"Do I have enough? No. Do it anyway."

- ☐ Open Charles Schwab or similar account
- ☐ Set up Wise (TransferWise) account
- ☐ Organize financial documents
- ☐ Get letters from banks/investment firms
- ☐ Calculate real budget (*include wine budget*)
- ☐ Sell everything you can't store

T-Minus 45 Days: The Visa Hustle

"Why is this so complicated?"

- ☐ Submit visa application (*with perfect documents*)
- ☐ Secure accommodation proof (*the impossible task*)
- ☐ Buy refundable flight tickets
- ☐ Purchase Italian health insurance
- ☐ Translate all documents (€€€)
- ☐ Practice your consulate interview answers

T-Minus 30 Days: The Final Sprint

"No turning back now"

- ☐ Visa appointment (*bring cookies for the staff*)
- ☐ Close unnecessary US accounts
- ☐ Set up mail forwarding
- ☐ Get 90-day supply of prescriptions
- ☐ Cancel subscriptions (*except Netflix*)
- ☐ Say goodbyes (*keep it short*)

T-Minus 14 Days: The Practical Panic

"What am I forgetting? Everything."

- ☐ Pack strategically (*you'll still bring too much*)
- ☐ Confirm accommodation again (*and again*)
- ☐ Transfer first 3 months expenses to accessible account
- ☐ Download offline maps
- ☐ Create emergency contact sheet
- ☐ Buy all the adapter plugs

T-Minus 7 Days: The Emotional Reckoning

"Is this genius or insanity?"

- ☐ Final document check (*obsess over this*)
- ☐ Backup everything digitally
- ☐ Give someone power of attorney
- ☐ Write down why you're doing this (*you'll need reminders*)
- ☐ Stock up on American things you'll miss
- ☐ Accept that you're terrified (*courage is fear walking*)

T-Minus 1 Day: The Leap

"Too late to chicken out"

- ☐ Check documents one more time
- ☐ Confirm ride to airport
- ☐ Take deep breath
- ☐ Pour final American whiskey
- ☐ Remember: Everyone who lives their dream started here
- ☐ Board plane anyway

First Week in Italy Survival Guide

You made it. Now what?

Day 1-2: Jet Lag and Joy

- ☐ Find nearest coffee bar
- ☐ Get Italian SIM card
- ☐ Locate closest supermarket
- ☐ Have minor panic attack
- ☐ Drink wine about it

Day 3-4: Bureaucracy Begins

- ☐ Apply for Permesso at post office
- ☐ Apply for Codice Fiscale
- ☐ Open bank account (*bring patience*)
- ☐ Register with local commune
- ☐ Question all life choices

Day 5-7: Finding Your Feet

- [] Join local expat groups
 - [] Establish morning coffee routine
 - [] Get lost at least once
 - [] Make first Italian friend
 - [] Realize you actually did it
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The "Oh Shit" Kit

Keep these handy at all times

Emergency Phrases

- "Non parlo bene italiano" (*I don't speak Italian well*)
- "Può aiutarmi?" (*Can you help me?*)
- "È normale?" (*Is this normal?*)
- "Quanto costa?" (*How much?*)
- "Dov'è il vino?" (*Where's the wine?*)

Crisis Contacts

- US Embassy: +39 06 46741
- Emergency: 112
- Your Italian landlord: _____
- That one expat who knows everything: _____
- Nearest wine shop: _____

Financial Lifelines

- Emergency fund access: _____
 - US bank 24-hour number: _____
 - Wire transfer backup: _____
 - "Bail me out" friend: _____
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The Bottom Line

You'll need:

- More money than you think
- More patience than you have
- More wine than is reasonable
- More courage than feels comfortable

You'll get:

- A life that's actually yours
- Stories worth telling
- Problems worth having
- Morning cappuccinos that justify everything

Remember: The only difference between you and someone living their dream in Italy is that they bought the ticket.

Now stop reading and start doing. Italy's waiting, and she doesn't like to be kept waiting.

Note: This checklist is based on 2025 requirements. Laws change faster than Italian bureaucrats work. Verify everything, trust nothing, bring cookies to appointments.