

# INTREPID ITALIAN

## HOW TO SAY CHEERS IN ITALIAN



## Ciao ciao!

*Grazie!* Thank you for downloading this cheat-sheet on how to say *cheers* in Italian. This guide features the most common ways to say *cheers* when raising a toast plus six rules of etiquette.

Got a trip to Italy coming up? Remember, you don't need to be fluent in Italian to have meaningful interactions with the locals and create memories that will last a lifetime, but you can be **fluent enough for travel**.

Learning to use just a few words can do wonders for enhancing your travel experiences. Plus, it's a great way to show respect and make a good first impression.

This is why I not only write detailed destination guides and create informative videos, I also created a [free travel phrase guide](#) and [online language courses](#) to help smart and savvy travellers like you get the most out of their travel experiences through the power of language.



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Hi! I'm Michele, an Australian travel blogger and language educator and 'guide' behind [The Intrepid Guide](#). I help my readers enrich their travels with beautiful and [detailed destinations guides](#), [free travel phrase guides](#), and effective [online language courses](#) that follow my 80/20 method so they can enjoy meaningful interactions with the locals and avoid being treated like a tourist. Over the past few years, I've travelled the world and learned several foreign languages using my unique building-block method which is the basis of all my language courses. Keep in touch with me via Instagram [@intrepiditalian](#) where I share daily Italian lessons.



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## How to say cheers in Italian: 4 Italian expressions to use

### 1. Salute!

Saying Salute! is by far the most popular way to say cheers in Italian. It's pronounced *sah-loo-teh*. "Salute" literally means health in Italian. You can use it in a variety of situations, both in formal and informal contexts. It's a very versatile word and can also be used as a sort of "blessing" after someone sneezes. Don't confuse it with "saluti" (*sah-loo-tee*) though, which means "greetings" or "regards" and is only used in formal contexts.

### 2. Alla salute!

A common variation to "salute" is "alla salute" (*ahl-lah sah-loo-teh*), which literally means "to the health". Like 'Salute!', it can be used in several situations.

### 3. Alla tua! / Alla vostra! / Alla nostra!

In the same way as seen with the previous phrases, another way to say cheers in Italian is using "alla tua" literally "to yours" which is the shortened version of "alla tua salute" literally "to your health", which is the equivalent of the English "here's to you", when addressing one person. This phrase changes to "alla vostra (salute)" (*ahl-lah voh-strah*) when you're toasting to more than one person, and to "alla nostra (salute)" (*ahl-lah noh-strah*) when you include yourself in it ("here's to us"). You can also add other words and say "Beviamo alla nostra", meaning "let's drink to us".



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## 4. Cin cin!

Last but not least, a very common phrase that you'll hear in Italian households during a toast, especially in informal contexts, is “cin cin”, pronounced *chin-chin*. This phrase comes from the Chinese ch'ing ch'ing', which was a friendly and informal greeting that was exported to European ports by sailors and traders. Over time, this greeting underwent various changes until it was adopted by the Italian language as a way to say cheers. What also increased the popularity of saying “cin cin” was the fact that the onomatopoeic sound resembled the clinking of glasses at the moment of toasting.

## How to say Cheers in Italian on special occasions

The act of toasting is a sign of celebration and good wishes. It is an essential part of the festive season, especially at Christmas and New Year, but also for weddings and other important events. There are specific phrases you can use to say cheers in Italian on special occasions throughout the year. Let's have a look:

### Christmas

Beside the traditional “Auguri” (best wishes) which fits to a variety of situations, including Christmas, an appropriate phrase that goes with toasting at Christmas is “Buon Natale” (Merry Christmas).



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## New Year's Eve

When midnight comes and the new year officially kicks in, raise your glass and say “Buon anno!”, “Buon anno nuovo!” or “Felice anno nuovo!” (Happy new Year) or again “Auguri!”.

## Weddings

Some common phrases uttered at weddings when making a toast in Italian are “Viva gli sposi” (Hurray to the bride and groom), “Congratulazioni” (Congratulations), “Viva l’amore” (Long live love).

## Other celebrations

Here are some other phrases and expressions to use. Say “Congratulazioni” (literally, congratulations) when raising a toast to celebrate a graduation, promotion, winning a sporting event or any other achievement. Say “Auguri” or “Buon compleanno” (Happy birthday) when celebrating someone’s birthday and say “Buon anniversario” (Happy anniversary) to celebrate romantic milestones.

## 6 Rules of etiquette to follow during Italian celebrations

Here’s a fun fact. The custom of toasting with glasses dates back to the Middle Ages. At that time there was the custom of having one’s glasses vigorously touched so that a few drops of one’s own drink would end up in the glasses of others’. This ritual, therefore, served to ensure that one’s drink was poisoned and nobody was attempting on their life!



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Today, toasting rules vary from country to country according to traditions and local customs. Italy has its own rules and superstitions when it comes to raising a glass too! In Italian tradition, if you receive an invitation from your Italian friend to attend their party, make sure you follow their lead so you don't get disapproving looks for accidentally doing something that attracts "bad luck"! It must be said, however, that some of these rules might be occasionally ignored when the context is very informal, but are certainly followed when it is a formal setting.

Here is what the *galateo* (the Italian etiquette or set of rules of good manners to be followed when in the company of others) tells us about the correct way to toast in Italian.

### 1. Water is a big no-no

According to Italian etiquette, toasting with water is bound to bring bad luck (and no one wants that, right?). The same goes for empty glasses: it is believed to bring bad luck too. Make sure you always have something in your glass when you raise it to say cheers.

### 2. Dinner host always starts the toast

It is common practice for *il padrone di casa* (the host) to initiate a toast by raising his or her *bicchiere* (glass) and saying a few words to the guests. It shouldn't be a long speech though, just a few words to say thank you are enough.



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### 3. Don't clink glasses

It's not considered polite in Italy to clink your glass with silverware to get the guests' attention and start the speech. Standing up once everyone's been served and pointing your glass towards the centre of the table will be enough to let people know that that is when the toast begins and they will naturally be quiet.

### 4. Don't cross arms

Similarly, you should avoid movements and crossing arms when making a toast. Simply raise your glasses and address the toast to each guest.

### 5. You don't need to make eye contact

Even though it's gradually becoming part of Italian custom to look the other person in the eye when making a toast, this is actually a Northern European tradition and you don't need to follow it in Italy.

### 6. Tap the bottom of your glass on the table

When you raise your glass and say "salute!" in Italian, before taking a sip, make sure you tap the bottom of your glass on the table or hard surface. The origin of this custom seems to be a kind of "thank you" gesture that was part of the gentlemen's code of honour who wanted to recognize and value the work of innkeepers in the osterie (taverns). Nowadays, it is also believed that failing to do so will negatively affect your sex life!





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## Grazie!

I hope you enjoyed this cheat-sheet. Remember, don't worry about not being able to remember it all, you're learning more than most other people do so you should be very proud of yourself. I know I am!

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If you have any feedback on this guide or want to share any suggestions for future material you'd love me to create, feel free to get in touch at [michele@theintrepidguide.com](mailto:michele@theintrepidguide.com)

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With all the encouragement in the world, I wish you success! Happy learning! Michele

