

# INTREPID ITALIAN

## LOANWORDS & COGNATES



## Ciao ciao!

*Grazie!* Thank you for downloading this Italian cognates and loanwords cheat-sheet. This guide features 17 powerful rules for turning English words you already know into their Italian equivalents.

Do you *tense* up when you speak Italian? Crack the code and master Italian tenses with **my Intrepid Italian 30-Day tenses challenge**. For more details, visit <https://bit.ly/tenses-challenge> or go to [IntrepidItalian.com](https://IntrepidItalian.com)

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.



**Hi! I'm Michele**, an Australian travel blogger and language educator and 'guide' behind [The Intrepid Guide](#). I help my readers and students 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.

# You *already* know some Italian: Loanwords and Cognates

In this guide, you will learn some Italian words that won't seem completely foreign to you because they are exactly the same in English. Then, we will learn how to apply 17 simple rules so you can start *Italianizing* English words you already know. Learning these rules will come in handy. With these rules, you'll be able to unlock a tonne of Italian vocabulary without too much effort.

## Popular Loan Words

Although Italians are very proud of their language, they have allowed some English words to creep in. Generally, they are pronounced the same way as in English with a couple of exceptions.

You'll hear words such as **gadgets**, **jogging**, **feeling** and **shock**. You'll even hear them use the word **okay**. Since computers have entered our lives, Italians will even say **clicare sul mouse**, meaning 'to click (on) the mouse'. Finally, there's **lo zapping**, which means to change TV channels with the remote control.

Consider the following list of words. Each is shown with the appropriate Italian definite article or better known as the word 'the' which we will learn more about later.

- **la radio**
- **l'autobus**
- **l'antenna**
- **l'hotel**
- **l'area**
- **l'idea**
- **l'hamburger**
- **il cocktail**
- **il jazz**
- **il cinema**
- **il computer**
- **il bar**
- **il blues**



- **il film**
- **il rock and roll**
- **il weekend**
- **il camping**
- **i jeans**
- **lo snob**
- **lo shock**
- **lo shopping**
- **lo sport**
- **lo shampoo**
- **lo zoo**

These are only a few of many English words that have entered the Italian language. In the same way, many Italian words are used in English-speaking countries including:

- **la pizza**
- **la pasta**
- **gli spaghetti**
- **i tortellini**
- **la mozzarella**
- **l'espresso**
- **il cappuccino**
- **il panino** - a sandwich / **i panini** - sandwiches
- **i biscotti** - cookies / **il biscotto** - cookie
- **il tiramisù**

Incidentally, did you know that **tiramisù** literally means 'pull me up'? This refers to the fact that this sweet dessert is made with strong Italian espresso coffee effectively giving you an energy boost or a 'pick me up'.



# Cognates

In addition to the words that have crept into the language directly, Italian and English have many cognates.

A cognate is a word in one language that has the same origin as a word in another one and may sound similar.

Here are some examples:

- airport - **l'aeroporto**
- attention - **l'attenzione**
- communication - **la comunicazione**
- important - **importante**
- incredible - **incredibile**

Fortunately, there are some rules that you can apply to *Italianize* words you already know.

Here are a few tips that will help you recognize and use cognates.

## Italianizing Nouns

Now that we're starting to look at the grammar, let's brush up on some grammatical terms. Don't stress. We're going to keep this really simple.

Don't know what a noun is? To identify a noun, ask yourself this easy question. Can I place either 'the', 'a' or 'an' in front of the word? If the answer is yes, then you've got yourself a noun!

For example, the word **pizza** is a noun because when we say '*a pizza*' or '*the pizza*' it makes sense. However, saying '*the delicious*' or '*a delicious*' on its own doesn't make sense.

With that in mind, here are a few rules to help build up your vocabulary of nouns.



## Rule #1

Nouns in English ending in **-y** become **-ia** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- biology - **la biologia**
- philosophy - **la filosofia**
- sociology - **la sociologia**
- anatomy - **l'anatomia**

## Rule #2

Nouns in English ending in **-ic(s)** become **-ica** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- music - **la musica**
- politics - **la politica**
- republic - **la repubblica**
- mathematic - **la matematica**

## Rule #3

Nouns in English ending in **-ty** become **-tà** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- city - **la città**
- identity - **l'identità**
- society - **la società**
- university - **l'università**



## Rule #4

Nouns in English ending in **-ce** become **-za** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- importance - **l'importanza**
- elegance - **l'eleganza**
- violence - **la violenza**
- patience - **la pazienza**

## Rule #5

Nouns in English ending in **-tion** become **-zione** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- nation - **la nazione**
- attention - **l'attenzione**
- education - **l'educazione**
- situation - **la situazione**

## Rule #6

Nouns in English ending in **-o(u)r** become **-ore** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- actor - **l'attore**
- doctor - **il dottore**
- professor - **il professore**
- motor - **il motore**



## Rule #7

Nouns in English ending in **-ary** become **-ario** in Italian

Here are some examples:

- secretary - **il segretario**
- vocabulary - **il vocabolario**
- salary - **il salario**
- functionary - **il funzionario**

## Rule #8

Nouns in English ending in **-ist** become **-ista** in Italian

Here are some examples:

- artist - **artista**
- violinist - **violinista**
- pianist - **pianista**
- optimist - **ottimista**

## Italianizing Adjectives

Earlier we spoke about nouns in our *pizza* example. Let's take this example one step further and add an adjective to it.

Adjectives can be identified by placing 'is' in front of a word. For example, 'the pizza *is* delicious', or 'the coffee *is* hot'.

Here are some rules to help you build up your vocabulary of adjectives.



## Rule #9

Adjectives in English ending in **-al** become **-ale** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- special - **speciale**
- personal - **personale**
- original - **originale**
- sentimental - **sentimentale**

## Rule #10

Adjectives in English ending in **-ect** become **-etto** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- perfect - **perfetto**
- correct - **corretto**
- erect - **eretto**
- direct - **diretto**

## Rule #11

Adjectives in English ending in **-ical** become **-ico** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- typical - **tipico**
- classical - **classico**
- political - **politico**
- geographical - **geografico**





## Rule #12

Adjectives in English ending in **-ous** become **-oso** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- generous - **generoso**
- curious - **curioso**
- nervous - **nervoso**
- ambitious - **ambizioso**

## Rule #13

Adjectives in English ending in **-able** or **-ible** become **-abile** and **-ibile** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- possible - **possibile**
- visible - **visibile**
- terrible - **terribile**
- responsible - **responsabile**
- adorable - **adorabile**

## Italianizing Verbs

Last but not least, we have the all-important verbs.

Verbs form the backbone of any language. This term alone might induce fear but just as we've done before we are going to keep things really simple.

A verb can be identified by adding 'to' in front of a word. For example, *to do*, *to eat*, *to cook*, *to travel*. These are all verbs. It's that easy!

It's important that you recognise verbs as they will help you form sentences with ease.



It's worth noting that In Italian, the 'to' part of any verb is already included as part of the word and is identified by the last three letters. There are only three different verb endings, they are:

**-ere**  
**-ire**  
**-are**

For example, the verb for *to eat* is **mangiare**, therefore the 'to' part is the **-are** ending. You'll be able to identify these endings in the following rules.

## Rule #14

Verbs in English ending in **-cate** become **-care** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- to educate - **educare**
- to indicate - **indicare**
- to complicate - **complicare**
- to imply, implicate - **implicare**

## Rule #15

Verbs in English ending in **-ize(-ise)** or **-yze(-yse)** become **-izzare** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- to organize - **organizzare**
- to sympathize - **simpatizzare**
- to analyze - **analizzare**
- to minimize - **minimizzare**



## Rule #16

Verbs in English ending in **-ish** become **-ire** in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- to finish - **finire**
- to abolish - **abolire**
- to embellish - **abbellire**
- to establish - **stabilire**

## Italianizing Adverbs

*Kindly, slowly, here, often, and very* are all examples of adverbs. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. By *modify* we mean to add to or change the meaning of a word.

In the following examples, the adverb is in **bold** and the verb that it modifies is in *italics*.

- John *speaks* **loudly**. (How does John speak?)
- **Afterwards** she *smoked* a cigarette. (When did she smoke?)
- Mary *lives* **locally**. (Where does Mary live?)

But adverbs can also modify adjectives. Look at these examples:

Modify an adjective:

- He is **really** *handsome*. (How handsome is he?)
- That was **extremely** *kind* of you.

Modify another adverb:

- She drives **incredibly** *slowly*. (How slowly does she drive?)
- He drives **extremely** *fast*.

Now that we know what an adverb is, let's look at the next set of rules.



## Rule #17

Adverbs in English ending in **-ably** and **-ibly** become **-abilmente** and **-ibilmente** respectively, in Italian.

Here are some examples:

- probably - **probabilmente**
- possibly - **possibilmente**

As you build up your vocabulary and don't yet know the word for something, it's ok to *Italianize* the English word using these 17 rules. Of course, there are some exceptions to these rules, but you'd be surprised how often they apply! As with everything, you learn by experience.



# Grazie!

I hope you enjoyed this cheat-sheet and learned something new. 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!

**Want more language resources?** Check out my guide on top-rated [languages tools, courses, and apps here](#). If you enjoyed this compact language guide and you want to discover how I can help you boost your language skills, [check out my popular language courses here](#).

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

