Money Matters

Currency:
- Italy's currency is the euro. Its value relative to the US dollar fluctuates, of course, but the rate is approximately 1 euro to 1.15-1.30 USD (meaning that if you spend 1 euro, you'll have spent the equivalent of $1.15-$1.30).
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 euro-cents; 1 euro; and 2 euros. Bills begin at 5 euros.

- Generally, a better exchange rate is obtained through ATMs in Europe rather than a currency-exchange office. While it's reasonable to bring a modest quantity of US currency with you (to exchange in the event of a bank card problem arising that requires a day or two to resolve), we do NOT recommend carrying large amounts of US cash in Europe.

Getting and Spending:
- Before departure, notify your bank(s) that you may be using their debit/credit cards in Italy (and any other countries in which you might use a card at an airport layover) in order to help avoid having your cards being locked for fraud alerts when you start using them in Europe.
- Your debit and/or credit cards may charge a Foreign Transaction Fee; check with your bank(s) before departure to learn of their policies and fees for foreign transactions.
- ATMs can be found in airport terminals upon arrival in Europe, and are plentiful in Florence and Rome. ATM menus allow you to conduct transactions easily in English.
- Credit cards are accepted at most businesses, although not as universally as in the US.
- You may encounter a business here or there that does not accept cash, but only card payments (if this is the case, the entrance should prominently display a sign with a strikethrough over an image of cash).
- At businesses where credit cards are accepted, Visa and Mastercard are reliable forms of payment, but few places accept American Express or Discover.
- In almost all cases, the price you see listed for purchase (clothes in shops, food in restaurants, etc) includes all taxes; the price listed will be exactly the price you pay!

Let us know if you have any additional questions about monetary issues!

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