

Hostelworld Guide for milan

Slick, sleek and uber-cool, Milan is one of the most stylish cities in the world. Lavish designer stores abound endless streets while just as lavish bags loaded with the latest 'must-have' items hang from endless shoppers' arms. Milan also has some of Italy's most breathtaking cathedrals, making it a perfect destination for sightseeing as well as shopping. Once all shopping and sightseeing is done, visitors can enjoy free snacks during 'aperitivo time' before ending the day in Navigli, Milan's coolest quarter.

In this Guide...

- Useful Information
- After Dark
- Places to Eat
- Top Attractions
- Budget Tips
- Where to Shop

The Essentials

Getting There

By plane: Milan is served by three airports - Linate, Malpensa and Orio al Serio. Some budget airlines use Orio al Serio and Malpensa, while Linate is nearest to central Milan. All are connected to the city centre via bus.

By train: Milan's Stazione Centrale has rail links with all of Europe's major cities. It is a very impressive building and not far from the historical centre.

By bus: Buses arriving from and going to major European cities do so from the bus station at Piazza Sigmund Freud.

Getting Around

On foot: Milan's historical centre is easily explored on foot, but to get from Stazione Centrale to Il Duomo you may want to utilise the metro.

By metro: Milan's metro network consists of three lines - M1 (red), M2 (green) and M3 (yellow). It is easy to use and efficient. Single journeys cost €1 and 24 hour tickets cost €3.

By bus/tram: Milan's buses and trams cover the city in its entirety but you'll be doing well if you figure either network out during a short stay.

Useful phrases

- Hello:** Ciao / Bonjourno
- Goodbye:** Ciao / Arrivederci
- Please:** Per Favore
- Thank you:** Grazie
- You're welcome:** Prego
- Yes:** Si
- No:** No
- Of course:** Certamente
- Excuse me:** Scusa
- How are you?:** Come stai?
- Open:** Aperto
- Closed:** Chiuso
- What is your name?:** Come ti chiami?
- My name is...:** Mi chiamo...
- How much?:** Quanto costa?
- The bill please?:** Il conto per favore.

Climate

As it is one of Italy's most northerly cities, Milan experiences cooler temperatures than most of its counterparts. Winters frequently experience temperatures of 0°C and sometimes even lower. Temperatures begin to climb in mid-April and by summer Milan experiences countless trademark hot days Italy is so synonymous with. September is extremely mild before things start to cool down again in October.

Useful Information

- Language:** Italian
- Currency:** Euro
- Electricity:** 220 Volts, AC/50Hz
- Area Code:** +39 (Italy), 02 (Milan)
- Emergency Codes:** Ambulance 118 / Fire 115 / Police 112
- Time Zone:** Central European Time (GMT + 1)
- Central Post Office:** Piazza Cordusio
- Main Tourist Office:** Via Marconi 1 (across from Il Duomo)

Consulates / Embassies

- USA:** +39 02 290 351
- Canada:** +39 02 67 581
- Australia:** +39 02 777 04227
- South Africa:** +39 02 809 030
- UK:** +39 02 723 001
- Ireland:** +39 06 697 9121*
- Germany:** +39 02 623 1101
- Spain:** +39 02 632 8831
- New Zealand:** +39 02 4801 2544
- France:** +39 02 655 9141

* Embassy in Rome

Cheap Eats

La Colubrina, Via Felice Casati, 5 When I saw a customer squeeze Paulo the manager's cheek here, it felt very familiar all of a sudden. This had to be a good thing since it was my first time there. Thin-crust pizzas are placed in front of you in return for €5 or more. Pasta dishes cost in and around the same. Needless to say I returned. *Open nightly from 7pm-11.30pm.*

Fancy a free feed?

Aperitivo time Every evening in Milan at around 6pm, bars all over the city leave a table full of finger food and snacks to be devoured at no extra cost. All you have to do is buy a drink! So rather than find a nice restaurant, save yourself anything up to €10 by visiting one of Milan's bars known for its aperitivo snacks (see below) between 6pm and 9.30pm and get fed for free!

Le Biciclette, Via Torti, Navigli Located just off Conca del Naviglio, this chic bar is a great place to start a night out. Each evening at 6pm over twenty plates packed with everything from nachos to sausages are placed along its marble counter. Thankfully it isn't until 9pm that they are removed, by which time you should be full as a tank. *Open daily from 12 noon-2am.*

Bar Brera, Via Brera 23, Brera Something of a Milanese institution, Bar Brera in the charming Brera district is one of the city's best known aperitivo bars. Its wooden décor is particularly engaging, making it difficult to leave after one or two glasses of wine and aperitivo snacks from the impressive buffet. *Open daily from 9am-2am.*

Gelaterias (Ice cream shops) An Italian city wouldn't be an Italian city unless it was heaving with gelaterias. In them you can treat yourself to all types of ice-cream for as little as €2. Tre Gazzelle (Corso Vittorio Emmanuelle, 22) and Viel (Corso Buenos Aires, 15) are two of Milan's best known.

After Dark

Ripa, Ripa di Porta Ticinese 19, Navigli This long, narrow bar is a popular hangout and buzzes well into the early hours at weekends. Its red-bricked walls make it easily distinctive from other bars while the dance, rock, reggae, r'n'b and pop tracks playing in the background make it a real people-pleaser. *Open nightly from 6pm-2am.*

Luca & Andrea, Alzaia Naviglio Grande 34, Navigli If a quiet glass of wine is all you're yearning, and not a tray full of beers, Luca & Andrea is the perfect spot. Friendly staff will quiz you to see what type of wine tickles your fancy before bringing it to your table. *Open daily from 12 noon-2am.*

Gay / Lesbian Milan

Milan is a city that sets trends as opposed to follow them. As a result it is a city that has more gay bars and clubs than other Italian cities. **After Line** (Via G.B. Sammartini 25) beside the train station is one of the city's most popular gay clubs. Another is **Ricci** (Piazza della Repubblica, 27) which is the current hotspot on the gay circuit. **Alexander's Cabaret** (Via G Ronzoni 2) is where you will encounter strip shows and drag queen beauty contests.

Spazio Movida, Via Ascanio Sforza 41, Navigli If the taste of beer is beginning to get tiresome and you need something to pep you up somewhat, check out this bar. Cocktails on its extensive menu start at €6. If this is a little pricey, the pints of German beer for €4 will suit. One thing that everyone should like are the friendly staff and laid-back tunes. *Open nightly from 6pm-2am.*

Dieci (10) Corso Como, 10 Corso Como This is the hottest bar in Milan at the moment. Subsequently, the bouncers can be selective on who they let in. It's still worth a try as this is Milan after all. It's also on uber-chic Corso Como. *Open nightly from 6pm-2am.*

Ponticello, Via Filippo Argelati 1, Navigli Every Friday and Saturday night up and coming Milanese bands entertain this bar's clientele with their cover versions making live music this bar's forte. *Open nightly from 6pm-2am.*

Plastic, Viale Umbria 10 You can't visit Milan without continuing one night into the next morning. Check out this club on that night. *Open Thurs-Sun from 10pm-4am; admission varies.*

Don't Miss

Il Cenacolo, Corso Magenta Famous for one attraction, Il Cenacolo is where you can see Leonardo Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper'. Sadly, the quality of the painting has suffered but it's still amazing to see nonetheless. *Open Tues-Sun 8.15am-7pm; admission €6.50 + €1.50 booking fee; tickets must be pre-booked.*

Castello Sforzesco, Piazza Castello Looming over Via Dante in downtown Milan is Castello Sforzesco, a huge castle dating back to the 14th century. Built as a defence by Galeazzo II Visconti, you can visit the castle's museums such as the Archaeological Museum as well as explore the castle's grounds. *Open Tue-Sun from 9am-5.30pm; admission free (grounds), varies for museums.*

Pinacoteca di Brera, Via Brera, 28, Brera Housed in a building that was constructed on the site of a 14th century convent, the Brera Gallery is primarily made up of paintings from churches and monasteries closed during the Napoleonic period. Highlights include Mantegna's 'Cristo Morto' in Room VI and Bellini's 'Predica di San Marco' in Room VIII. *Open Tues-Sun 8.30am-7.15pm; admission €15.*

Italy's oldest gothic building

Il Duomo, Piazza del Duomo One of Italy's most breathtaking cathedrals, Il Duomo is notable for its spires and statues which reach to the sky from all angles (there are 135 spires and over 2,000 statues). The interior and views from the roof terrace are also awe-inspiring. *Open daily from 6.50am-7pm; admission free (cathedral), €4 (stairs) / €6 (elevator) to roof terrace.*

San Siro, Stadio Giuseppe Meazza, Via Piccolomini 5 Whether it's for a game or a tour of the stadium, sports fans should visit this football stadium where AC Milan and Inter, two of Italy's biggest clubs, play. *Season runs from August-May; tour open daily from 10am-5pm; admission €8.*

Mark Your Calendar

January - Corteo dei Re Magi To mark the end of Christmas on January 6th, this traditional parade marches from Il Duomo to Sant'Eustagio in the centre of Milan.

February/March - Carnevale Ambrosiana This, the longest running carnival in Milan, is a favourite with children who dress up and throw confetti all over each other in Piazza del Duomo! Parades and other festivities take place throughout the city.

March/April - Easter Rowing Regatta Universities from all over the world travel to Milan for this race which takes place in Idropark Fila, part of the Milan University sports complex.

May - Giro d' Italia Italy's version of the Tour de France isn't as renowned as the aforementioned race but attracts many big names nonetheless. It climaxes in Milan towards the end of May.

May - Cornetto Free Music Festival Staged in Piazza del Duomo, this is one of the most popular events on the Milanese calendar. Not only does it attract the world's biggest acts, but it's totally free!

June - Festival del Naviglio The Navigli district's annual festival sees torch-lit processions and a whole lot more entertain all those who attend this 10-day event.

June to September - Serate al Museo Otherwise known as 'Nights at the Museum', various events are held in seven different museums throughout the summer in Milan.

September - La Nivola e il Santo Chiodo This is one of the most unique events to take place in the city and sees a priest raised up to the roof of Il Duomo to recover a nail, reportedly from the cross that Christ died on.

October - Eurotribu' Translating as 'Eurotribes', six concerts are staged in Teatro Piccolo for this festival. Everything from pop to jazz music can be heard by bands from around the world.

November - Milan Jazz Festival This annual jazz festival attracts jazz artists from both home and abroad who play in venues all around the city.

December - Festa di Sant'Ambrogio Religious celebrations, fairs and more are put on throughout Milan each year on December 7th to mark the day of the city's patron saint.

Get Connected

Grazia, Piazza Duca d'Aosta 14 Located directly across the road from Stazione Centrale, Grazia is one of the more modern internet cafés in Milan. Choose from one of over 30 computers, all with flat screens and speedy access. They also have beverages to choose from if you are parched. *Open daily from 8am-2am; €4 per hour.*

Internet Centre, Viale Tunisia 11 With 18 terminals to choose from and chilled out tunes in the background, this internet café is one of the busier ones in Milan. It enjoys a good location off busy Corso Buenos Aires and has private booths if you want to cybercam with friends back home. *Open daily from 9am-midnight; €1.80 per hour.*

Extremelot, Ripa di Porta Ticinese 9, Navigli This Navigli district internet café is one of the most pleasant places to log on to the world wide web in Milan. It is also one of the more popular cybercafés with online gamers. *Open daily from 9am-midnight; €6 per hour.*

Ethnicity, Via Le V. Veneto 1 Perched at the top of Giardini Pubblici is Ethnicity, a place that isn't so much an internet café, more a place where you can log on to the internet. They offer many services and have booths for making long-distance calls back home. *Open Mon-Fri 9am-8pm.*

www.

www.cenacolvinciano.it (Cenacolo tickets)
www.milanoinfotourist.com
www.teatroallascala.org
www.acmilan.com
www.milandaily.com

**Since the London Bombings in July '05, most internet cafés will require photographic ID from you to let you log on.*

Retail Therapy

Quadrilatero D'Oro Milan's 'Golden Quarter' of shopping streets is adorned with the most ornate stores selling the latest designer clothing. Comprising of Via Monte Napoleone, Via Sant'Andrea, Via della Spiga and Via Alessandro Manzoni, Prada, Dolce & Gabbana and Yves Saint Laurent all have stores here. The Armani store looks more like a hotel. The shoppers tend to be very beautiful so arm yourself with your shades to fit in.

Corso Buenos Aires The long and noisy Corso Buenos Aires can be a bit much at times but it is where you will find shops most of us have become accustomed to such as Footlocker and H&M.

It's not all about designer gear

Mercato Papiniano, Viale Papiniano Walking around Milan's more affluent shopping streets for too long may have you craving for something new for your backpack. And looking at the price tags for too long may have you longing for a brighter credit card. But mosey down to this market in the south-west part of the city and you can pick up anything from perfume to slippers for under €10. *Open Tues & Sat from 8am-6pm.*

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II Constructed between 1865 and 1871, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is one of Milan's greatest buildings and is worth visiting whether you plan on upsetting your credit card balance or not. A neoclassical masterpiece, it was badly bombed during air raids in 1943 but has been thankfully restored to its former glory.

Via Torino Conveniently located just off Piazza del Duomo, baggy jeans and hoodies are what you will find here as many of the shops are skate-orientated.

Nine T Nine, 6 Via Stradivari It's a little out of the city centre, but this 99c shop not far from the train station is where you will pick up all sorts of bits and pieces for less than a euro.

Budget Tips

Visit Milan's places of worship Just like as in most Italian cities, most of Milan's cathedrals and churches are free to visit. Many of them are also some of the city's most beautiful buildings. Notable ones include **Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio** with its gold altar, **Chiesa di San Maurizio** where you'll find some of the city's most remarkable paintings, and **Chiesa di San Marco** which dates back to 1254.

Check out Cimitero Monumentale Not far from the city centre at Piazzale del Cimitero Monumentale is Cimitero Monumentale, a graveyard with some of the most outlandish tombstones you are likely to ever see. One is a 3D version of Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper'. This is the resting place for many famous Italians. *Open Tues-Sun from 8.30am-5.30pm.*

Chill out in Milan's gardens No matter what city in the world you are in, there is nothing more pleasurable than relaxing in one of its parks when the crowds of downtown begin to irritate. Milan's two main open spaces are **Giardini Pubblici** and **Parco Sempione**. The former is the city's largest park and always busy in the summer while the latter is behind Castello Sforzesco.

Some free, modern culture

Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Via Palestro 16

Housed in a building where Napoleon once lived, Milan's modern art gallery is one of the city's most intriguing galleries and, since it's free to get in, is well worth visiting. Located at the foot of Giardini Pubblici, it is home to some of Italy's best modern art. *Open Tues-Sun 9.30am-5.30pm; admission free.*

People-watch around Quadrilatero D'Oro Your bank balance may not permit you to shop around Quadrilatero D'Oro, but it's one of the best places to people-watch in the city. Saturday afternoons are best when the *really* beautiful people come out.

A Day in Milan...

Il Duomo, Milan's number one attraction, should be visited early to avoid the queues. The view when you reach the top is breathtaking.

Locate Via Dante on your map. The castle you can see in the distance is Castello Sforzesco (below). Explore its grounds and maybe even a museum.

Grab your lunch. There are snack shops all over the city selling paninis for around €3. After that make your way back towards Piazza del Duomo.

Wander through the amazing Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II before making your way up to Quadrilatero D'Oro, home to countless designer shops.

Not far from Quadrilatero D'Oro is Pinacoteca di Brera, one of Italy's finest art galleries. Go in and admire some of the country's finest paintings in its 38 rooms.

Right outside the door of the Brera Gallery is Bar Brera, one of Milan's most enchanting bars. Stop in for some aperitivo snacks and a glass of wine.

Take the metro from Lanza to Porta Genova to explore the Navigli district, Milan's liveliest quarter. Get more aperitivo snacks and wine in Luca & Andrea.

Go bar hopping along Navigli Grande and the adjacent canal where you'll find wine bars, cocktails bars and more.

From Navigli hop in a cab and finish the night off in Plastic on Viale Umbria, one of Milan's hippest nightclubs.