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HEALTH

Italy shutdown: what is open and what is closed

12 Mar, 2020

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All you need to know about Italy's nationwide shutdown to battle the Coronavirus.

Italy has once more made headlines around the world after Italian premier Giuseppe Conte announced that the country would go into a [total shutdown](#), in place from 12-25 March, to fight a worsening Coronavirus crisis.

While announcing the [drastic measures](#) late on 11 March, Conte was quick to underline that Italy's food shops and pharmacies would **remain open**, hoping to avoid a repeat of the [panic buying](#) after the country's [quarantine measures](#) were first ushered in earlier this week.

The central message of the government is to **STAY AT HOME** and if you must go out, for essential reasons only, you must practice 'social distancing' by keeping at least one metre away from the next person.

But between now and 25 March what exactly is closed in Italy and, more importantly, what is open?

Food

Firstly, services relating to food and medicine are guaranteed. All supermarkets and grocery shops selling food will remain open. There is also home delivery from the restaurants and pizzerie that choose to stay open for this purpose (they are otherwise closed to the public). All food markets are closed. Food production companies and food suppliers will continue to work as normal. Roadside diners along motorways will remain open. Supermarkets will stay open inside shopping centres (which are otherwise closed). Keep your distance between others.

Health

Pharmacies will remain open but may operate with reduced hours. You can still go to the doctor. You cannot enter the waiting rooms of hospital emergency areas, senior citizens' homes or hospices unless there are serious reasons.

Can I leave my house?

People may leave the house to buy food or medicine - and only one person per household may leave for this purpose. Crucially, **anybody who leaves home must carry an official self-declaration document**, which is issued by the interior ministry and can be [downloaded here](#), even if you are just going to the local shop.

Can I go for a walk or a run in the park?

It is strongly recommended that you stay at home but if you wish to go to a park or open space for reasons of exercise it is permitted so long as it is for a limited time and you keep a distance of at least one metre between others. Gathering of any kind are prohibited.

Can I still go to work?

If your work is essential and you have no possibility of working from home, yes. However the government has asked all workers to engage in smart working, wherever possible, and has asked employers to facilitate leave or holiday time. All non-essential production, business and commercial activity has ceased.

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Are buses and trains running?

Yes. The government has guaranteed that public transport will remain in service however the timetables of local and national services affecting road, rail, sea and air travel will be reduced.

Can I travel?

Can I walk my dog?

Yes but only in the immediate vicinity of your residence and for a very limited time.

Are the banks still open?

Yes. Banks, financial and insurance services remain open. Opening hours may be reduced outside of cities. Keep your distance from others.

Going to sick children and family members

You can go out to assist a sick family member and, in the case of separated parents, you can go and pick up your children. In this case you can also go outside your area of residence.

Are the petrol pumps open?

Yes.

Is the post office still open?

Yes. You may continue to use the post office but remember to keep a distance from others. Opening hours may be reduced outside of major urban areas.

Can I visit my family or friends?

No. Not unless it is for serious reasons. Organising dinners and parties in your home, either inside or outside, is also prohibited.

Can I still go out for coffee?

Absolutely not. Apart from the fact that you must [stay at home](#), all bars, restaurants, pubs, icecream parlours and pastry shops are closed.

Can I still buy cigarettes?

Yes. Tobacconists will stay open. If they are closed at night there is a cigarette vending machine outside.

Can I still buy newspapers or magazines?

Yes. Newsstands are open and newspapers and magazines will continue to be printed.

Can I go to my holiday home?

No. Travel for tourism is prohibited. Only in the event of a serious emergency (gas or water leaks) can one go to a house other than that of your normal residence.

Are shops selling cleaning products and detergents still open?

Yes.

Yes, all types of laundries and dry cleaners will remain open.

Can I get my hair cut?

No. All hairdressers, barbers and beauticians are closed.

Funerals

Funeral parlours will remain open. Weddings and other civil and religious ceremonies have already been stopped.

What if I need a mechanic or a plumber?

These services are seen as essential and mechanics and plumbers may continue to work if they choose. Hardwares may remain open.

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The emergency measures come as Italy struggles to contain the Coronavirus crisis, recording 200 more deaths in the last day, with more than 12,000 people infected since the outbreak began in the north of the country less than three weeks ago.

Italy's schools, universities, pubs and museums remain closed, until at least 3 April. Churches are open but there are no public religious ceremonies.

Conte thanked Italians for their sacrifice so far and called for their continued cooperation in the effort to beat the Coronavirus which has now been declared by the World Health Organization as a pandemic.

"We will see the effect of these measures in a couple of weeks", said Conte, adding that the golden rule remains the same: stay at home.

To read the government's decree in Italian, [click here](#). To read it in English, [click here](#).

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