

# USING YOUR PHONE IN ITALY

## Important Pre-Departure Phone Decisions

During your time in Italy, you are **required to have an operating smartphone that can make/receive calls, send/receive text messages, and that has a data plan**. This is important so that Verto is able to contact you in the event of an emergency and you are able to get in contact with the Verto staff without relying on wi-fi connection that in some cases might not be available. This is mandatory – as outlined in the [Cell Phone Requirements Policy](#) – and is in the interest of your safety and well-being while abroad.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

If you plan on using your current phone, **your phone MUST be unlocked by your current cell phone provider prior to arriving abroad**. Unlocking your phone in Italy is not possible – this is **best done well in advance of your departure**. *If you do not unlock your phone prior to arrival, you will be required to purchase a second smartphone for use abroad.*

Here are your phone plan options for Florence:

## Option 1:

### Prepaid Local SIM Card (Cheapest Option)

With a prepaid local SIM card you will get your own Italian phone number for texting and calling, and you can connect on apps like iMessage, Facetime, and the internet. Your old number will still work on your phone for contacting friends and family back home via iMessage, Whatsapp, or other messaging platforms.

Steps to obtain a prepaid Italian SIM card:

1. **Your phone MUST be unlocked** prior to departure to be able to use a new SIM card.
2. Once in Florence, **your Care Team Leader will help you purchase** a prepaid SIM card and a package which you can top up as needed with a local provider (we recommend TIM, Vodafone, or WindTre for a pay-as-you-go plan).
  - a. The best deal with local SIM cards is to purchase a monthly allowance (typically no more than 20 Euros a month), which includes between 70GB or 100GB a month depending on the cost of the plan and the company chosen for it and will last 30 calendar days. You can 'top up your phone' at any Tabacchi store around the city or at the phone provider stores.

## Option 2:

### International Phone Plan with Home Carrier

Although not recommended due to high cost, you may choose to purchase an international phone plan with your current at-home phone provider prior to your departure to Italy. This option allows you to keep your current phone number. You must ensure that your plan will have both data and calls/texts available internationally. Please note, you will need to switch on the data plan every day therefore keep in mind the daily fee and budget accordingly. Keeping the data plan switched off is not an option due to communication and safety best practices that every Verto student needs to follow.

## Option 3:

### eSIM

An eSIM is a digital version of a physical SIM card that is built into some devices and allows them to connect to a mobile network. Before buying an eSIM plan, you should check if your device is eSIM compatible (most Androids and iPhone manufactured after 2018 are compatible) and ensure your phone is unlocked; otherwise, your eSIM will not work.

To use an eSIM, you'll need to buy a data plan online that works best for you based on how many GBs you will be using (the average traveler uses around 10GBs per month). It is recommended to download and purchase your eSIM plan before you travel so that when you land in the airport you can easily activate it.

Be sure to select a data plan that includes phone calls and text messages in case of emergencies, **as you are required to be in possession of a working cell phone with the ability to make and receive voice calls, SMS, and internet data capability per our [Cell Phone Policy](#).**

Please note that if you will be traveling out of the country while on-site, your plan may not cover the international destination, so be sure to purchase a plan that will cover your weekend travel plans.

eSIMs and SIMs can be purchased during Discovery Week; our on-site time will connect students with a local provider (likely Vodafone) to purchase. **Remember, your phone will need to be unlocked before leaving the US, if not, the eSIM/SIM will not work.** The phone plan will need to include data and minutes to call.

**Please note: In case you phone is misplaced or broken you will be able to purchase an Italian Smartphone**

### On-site

Steps to obtain a local smartphone:

1. Once in Italy, **your Care Team Leader will help you purchase a local smartphone** or you may choose to buy and have it delivered to the Verto Florence Study Center.
2. Basic smartphones range from about 80-150 Euro from either a local shop or the main phone provider stores: TIM, Vodafone, and WindTre.

**IMPORTANT:** Regardless of which option you choose, it is wise to make sure you have comprehensive insurance for your phone in case it gets broken, lost, or stolen.

**You must give your cell number to Verto staff during the first few days in Florence and always keep your data switched on so that you can be contacted in an emergency.**

**Add Verto Florence's phone number to your contacts so that we can reach you during an emergency.**