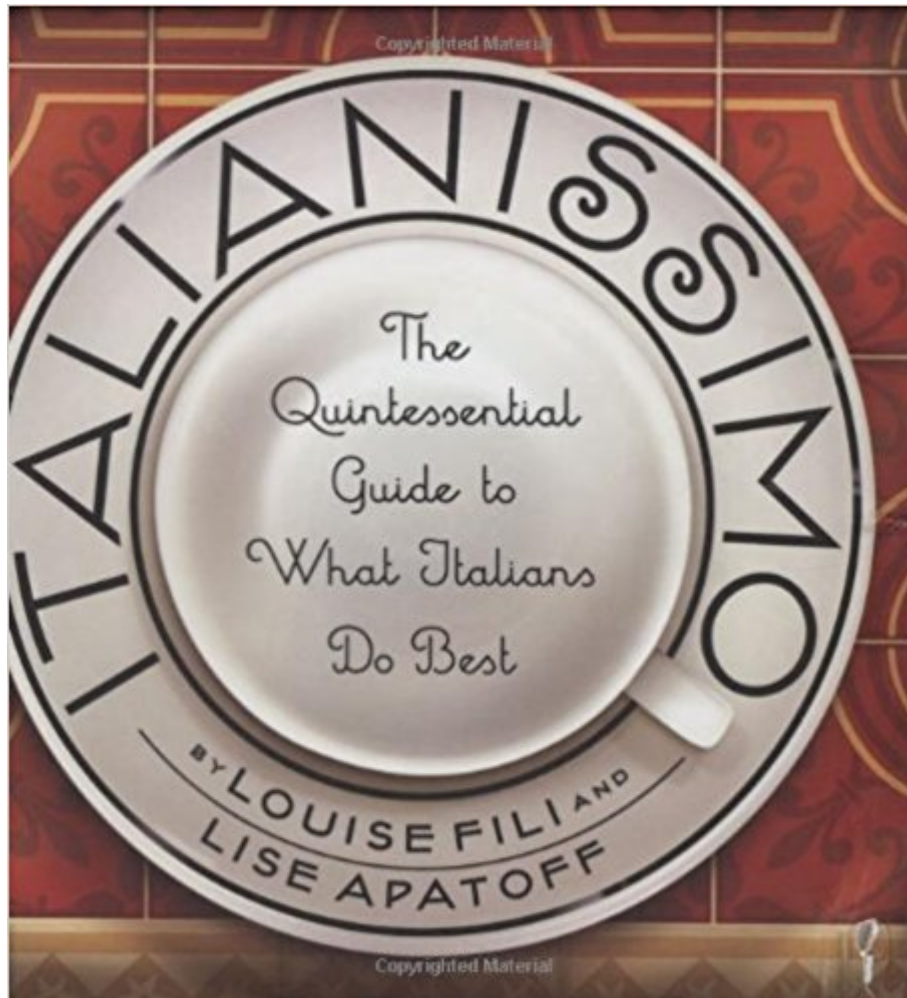




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# Italianissimo: The Quintessential Guide To What Italians Do Best



## Synopsis

What is it about Italy that inspires passion, fascination, and utter devotion? This quirky guide to the Italian way of life, with its fifty witty mini-essays on iconic Italian subjects, will answer that question as well as entertain and delight both real and armchair travelers. Topics range from expressive hand gestures to patron saints, pasta, parmesan, shoes, opera, the Vespa, the Fiat 500, gelato, gondolas, and more. History, folklore, superstitions, traditions, and customs are tossed in a delicious sauce that also includes a wealth of factual information for the sophisticated traveler: • why lines, as we know them, are nonexistent in Italy • why a string of coral beads is often seen around a baby's wrist • what the unlucky number of Italy is (it's not thirteen, unless seating guests at a table, when it IS thirteen • taking into account the outcome of the Last Supper) • why red underwear begins to appear in shops as the New Year approaches In addition to the lyrical and poetic, Italianissimo provides useful and indispensable information for the traveler: deciphering the quirks of the language (while English has only one word for "you," in Italy there are three), the best place to find balsamic vinegar (in Modena, of course), the best gelato (in Sicily, where they first invented it using the snow from Mount Etna). There are also recommendations for little-known museums and destinations (the Bodoni museum, the Pinocchio park, legendary coffee bars). This is a new kind of guidebook overflowing with enlightening and hilarious miscellaneous information, filled with luscious graphics and unforgettable photographs that will decode and enrich all trips to Italy • both real and imaginary.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The hysterical Italianissimo: The Quintessential Guide to What Italians Do Best by Louise Fili and Lise Apatoff had me in tears of laughter. The book covers the prerequisite fabulous wine, olive oil and vegetables and also touches on other important culinary strengths like making coffee. Some of the funnier pages highlight Italian idiosyncrasies like the inability to stand in line and the adoration of Italian men of their mothers." --The San Francisco Examiner

"As you would expect from a designer of Fili's caliber, the book is not only charming but gorgeous. Essays are elegantly laid out and accompanied by memorable photos, collages and, best of all, an illustrated chart of hand gestures. Weight and comprehensiveness are not the objectives here; the diminutive size of Italianissimo makes it ideal for carrying in purse, suitcase or even backpack, in case you plan on trekking across Italy. This little book may entice you to do so." --STEP inside design

"What do Italians do best? Many things, according to 'Italianissimo,' a most unusual and idiosyncratic guide to Italian culture. The list includes things that one might expect, such as balsamic vinegar, coffee, soccer, gelato and the art of eating, to quirky items such as hand gestures, neorealist cinema, patron saints, the motor scooter and, my personal favorite, Pinocchio. What makes the book especially enjoyable is the surprising quality of the choices. The Fiat 500 (the Italian car made for the masses, was introduced in 1936, followed by the Nuova Fiat 500 in 1957. Discontinued for a while, it reappeared in 2007 in time for its 50th anniversary) Also here is the piazza, or town square, as Italian an icon as you'll get." --The Chicago Tribune

"Italianissimo: The Quintessential Guide to What Italians Do Best is a slight but informative and entertaining compendium of all things Italian. Authors Louise Fili and Lise Apatoff write brief and engaging summaries of mores and manners, cultural traditions and icons. The encyclopedic book covers patron saints and Pinocchio, opera and olive oil; gelato and gondolas...While the book is a diverting read, there's also practical advice for those who will be traveling to Italy." --The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

"From the A of aceto balsamico to the V of vespa, this gorgeous little hardback has a classy 1920s look, each double-page spread introducing a different element of Italian culture with a short explanation alongside bright, appealing and often vintage photos...What makes this book really stand out is that it sparkles with so many overlooked elements of life in Italy...There is also practical information although the focus is definitely on culture and the tone is light and fun...it pays homage to Italy and does so in a stylish and eclectic way, making the country's icons burst with life. In short, this sleek and sassy guide to Italian culture fa molto bella figura." --The Florentine

"Italianissimo" --The Quintessential Guide to What Italians Do Best is a small book, just over 100 pages, but it packs an enormous amount of pleasure into its modest borders. We shouldn't be surprised -- it's designed by Louise Fili, one of the

truly great graphic designers, and written with Lise Apatoff. Within: Vespas, pasta, Italian light, shoes, soccer, and more. A cover-to-cover delight. " --Manhattan User's Guide" With the help of Italianissimo: The Quintessential Guide to What Italians Do Best, I can do some delightful armchair traveling... This nice square book, with glorious photos and great design, is itself very Italian-and, like a serving of pasta at Dal Bolognese in Rome, just enough to satisfy. The book is a list of 50 categories. Each gets a two-page spread: smart text, full-page photo. Like a luxury magazine, only on a single subject-the glory of the Italian spirit... Good enough to eat, yes?" --Jesse Kornbluth, HeadButler.com

“For the veteran or budding Italophile, there’s a new book, Italianissimo: The Quintessential Guide to What Italians Do Best, by Louise Fili and Lise Apatoff, that offers a special look at all things Italian, from L’Aceto Balsamico (balsamic vinegar) to La Vespa (the wasp-shaped motor scooter) — all in alphabetical order too. For my money, this (and watching almost any Fellini film) is the next best thing to being there. And there’s no fare la coda (waiting on line or not) at il mercato (the market) or suffering le autorità (authority figures) or il maschio (the Italian male) to get a copy.

• The Daily Heller, by Print Magazine

Louise Fili is a graphic designer specializing in logo, package, restaurant, type, and book design. She was art director of Pantheon Books from 1978 to 1989, where she designed more than 2,000 book jackets. She has received awards from every major design competition, has taught and lectured on graphic design and typography, and has work in the permanent collection of the Library of Congress, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, and the Bibliothèque Nationale. She was the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and is the co-author of eleven books on design. Fili was recently inducted into the Art Directors Hall of Fame. A resident of Florence since 1978, Lise Apatoff earned her bachelor of fine arts from the University of California at Santa Barbara and her master of fine arts from the University of Washington. She is an official museum guide for the city of Florence and has worked all over Italy as a translator, interpreter, tour planner and leader, and museum lecturer. She has been visiting and tasting in kitchens all over Italy for twenty-five years, and for the past decade has been taking lucky guests with her to explore the marvels of the food and culture of Tuscany.

This is a fun coffee table book but not what I expected. If you are buying for your coffee table- you'll be fine.

This is a gift for someone else, looks fun.

Even though I know a lot of little facts about Italy this book was fun and charming. The authors made me laugh at Italians and myself and taught me a lot more about the country I have come to love. It covers semi-serious topics and makes you chuckle. It comes in handy to know these facts. I will pass this on to my friends who have visited Italy and those who have not, but hope to. Nice format. Great photos. Some text was very tiny.

This is a charming collection of "things Italian" that together gives the flavor of Italy. It is appropriate for a first-time visit to the country or for someone quite familiar with everyday pleasures there.

Hilarious!

Bought as a thank you gift.

Here is a fun but practical "coffee table book" that measures a mere six inches square. On one side there is a great color photo and on the opposite page a review of the unique accomplishment or cultural contribution from the Italian culture and history. It's what makes one proud to be Italian! Bravissimo!

Great little book, full of all kinds of fun little insights.

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