

10/21/08

**“Beware What You Eat”
by
Tom Holbrook**

As you read this Judy and I, and our friends, are hurtling down a country road on a bus filled with tourists like ourselves enjoying all that Italy has to offer. I thought you would be interested in some of the instructions and advice we were given prior to our trip so we would be prepared for everything we would encounter in a foreign land. Most are normal but some have a dark side to them.

- 1- We recommend you pre-negotiate taxi fares to avoid unpleasant surprises at the end of the journey.
- 2- When ordering from a menu, be aware that eggs, bacon, or steaks may not be cooked to your liking.
- 3- Keep receipts until you have left restaurants or bars as occasionally there are spot checks on owners for tax purposes.
- 4- The Italian food you know and love from back home may differ quite surprisingly from the local reality and the ‘typical’ Italian fare you may be expecting. (Is that good or bad?)
- 5- You may be surprised that, contrary to expectations, the warm, effusive service you receive in restaurants, etc., in other parts of the world is not necessarily the norm in Italy. (Uh-oh!)
- 6- In the event of an accident, you should exit from the doors or emergency exits/hatches. If that’s impossible, small hammers are provided to break windows. Large windows must be hit in the corners to break the glass. (We haven’t had to loose the hammers yet.)

The following are suggestions and warnings to those from abroad that happen to come to our fair shores in America and were submitted by actual visitors. a

- 1- You will be fined heavily, if found walking on the highways. For all nature calls, you are suppose to take the closest exit, and use public rest rooms.
- 2- You won’t find any taxi/cab waiting in a queue on the road sides. (You will have to call them up by number in yellow pages.)
- 3- Your driver’s license can be seized if caught drunk while driving.
- 4- If a cop (police officer) asks you to stop while you are driving, just stop the car at the right side of the road, and wait inside. Never get out of the car. Cop may consider it as an offense and might shoot you for self-defense.
- 5- Try to avoid using car horns, unless required. It could precipitate road rage in others.
- 6- You will find both “Hot” and “Cold” water in the tap at all places... apartments, offices as well as in all public rest rooms.
- 7- At restaurants you won’t get a finger bowl. One can use paper napkins.

- 8- If you're a vegetarian just be careful while ordering to specify 'no meat' and don't say anything else like, 'without meat', or 'meatless' as they don't understand these terms. If you want a drink without ice, specify 'No Ice', and not "Without Ice."
- 9- Unlike India, in U.S. the TV channels can't be tuned according to your wish. ESPN will come on channel 39 for everybody. You can't change it.
- 10- Never ask for a 'rubber' when you need an eraser. Here a rubber means 'condom.'
- 11- When you are going to smoke, do not say, "I'm going out for a fag." 'Fag' in British English means, 'to smoke,' whereas in American English, it means something very different.
- 12- There is no such thing as 'Eve teasing' in the USA. It is called 'sexual harassment,' and one can land in jail, if caught.
- 13- Don't say, "Phone as engaged," as here engaged means getting an engagement ring. Rather say "I'll call you, or buzz you."
- 14- At work, or elsewhere, while talking, if you want to say Yes, just say 'Yes.' Don't nod your head up and down. Moving your head side to side is very confusing, and it's mostly taken as NO!

Have a great week folks... Ciao you all!

#