

Arriving in Venice

Venice's historic center is 3 km or 2 miles off the coast of Northern Italy. The city is built on more than 100 islands in the Venetian Lagoon, and it's linked to the mainland by a rail and road causeway named the *Ponte della Libertá* ("Bridge of Liberty"). You'll cross this bridge if you arrive by train, bus, car, or land taxi; another option is to come from the airport or a mainland parking lot by public water bus or water taxi.

By Air

From Venice Marco Polo Airport

The major airlines fly into **Marco Polo Airport, Venice International Airport** (<http://www.veniceairport.it/core/index.jsp?jsessionid=2T0JNVNW1DQGVQFIAIBCFEY?requestid=158965&language=en>, airport code: VCE), which is 6 km from the city on the Venetian lagoon.

Next, follow the signs outside the terminal doors to the Alilaguna water bus (it's easy to take an Alilaguna water bus or a water taxi from Marco Polo Airport to Venice. The boat pier is some distance from the terminal on the edge of the Venetian Lagoon. Purchase a Venice airport boat ticket to the Piazza San Marco or any of several other stops in the historic center.

Alternatively, you can ride an ATVO or ACTV airport bus to reach the Piazzale Roma.

If you prefer a cab, figure on paying €30-40 for a land taxi to the Piazzale Roma or €90-100 for a water taxi to your hotel.

From Treviso Airport

Several low-cost airlines use Treviso Airport (<http://www.trevisoairport.it/tsf/index.jsp?requestid=158787&language=en>), which is 19 miles or 30 km from *Venezia*, or considerably farther away than Venice's own Marco Polo Airport.

If you're headed for Venice from Treviso, the easiest--and cheapest--way to get there is to take the connecting ATVO Eurobus service. Bus times coincide with low-cost airlines arrivals and departures, and the fare is much cheaper than a taxi: only €5 one-way or €9 return. (It's also much cheaper than another service, Shuttle Direct, which should be avoided unless you want to spend more money for ground transportation than you may have paid for your flight.)

Purchase your ticket at the ATVO counter in the airport and stamp it in the ticket-validation machine on the bus. (If you need a ticket from Venice to Treviso Airport, go to the ATVO ticket office in the Piazzale Roma.)

You'll need to allow 1 hour 10 minutes for the bus trip, including two brief stops in Venice-Mestre, a suburb on the mainland where you can catch express trains to cities throughout Italy. After pausing in Mestre, the bus crosses the causeway to Venice, which is several kilometers offshore in the Venice Lagoon. The end of the line is the Piazzale Roma, where you can walk or catch a *vaporetto* (water bus) to your hotel.

By Train

Venice Santa Lucia Station

Many domestic and international trains discharge passengers at the Stazione Ferroviaria Santa Lucia, modern railway station in the historic center, next to the causeway that leads to the mainland.

As you leave the station's main entrance, head toward the floating waterbus platforms. Buy a ticket before boarding the No. 1 *vaporetto*, which makes stops all along the Grand Canal, or the No. 2 express boat (formerly the No. 82) to San Marco. Be sure you're going in the right direction--i.e., toward San Marco unless you're staying in one of the outlying districts.

Another (much more expensive) option is to take a water taxi to your hotel.

By Car

Arriving

You'll be approaching Venice on the A4 *Autostrada* from the north or south. (If you're driving in on the A27 from Trieste, you'll merge with the A4 a few kilometers north of Mestre.) Use the central *Mestre* exit if you're coming from the south. From the north, take the *Mestre Est-Favorita* exit. Follow the signs to your destination, depending on whether you'd prefer to park on the mainland (which is easier) or at the edge of Venice's historic center (which can be easy or a nightmare, depending on whether traffic on the causeway is backed up).

Parking

To avoid high parking costs and traffic jams, it's best to park in Mestre--either next to the railroad station or in the *San Giuliano* lot, which is near the water as you head toward Venice. You can then catch a train or bus into the city or (from San Giuliano) take the public boat.

If you're brave, well-heeled, or visiting in low season, cross the *Ponte della Libertà* (the bridge or causeway that connects Venice with the mainland) and try one of the following:

Autorimessa Comunale, the municipal garage at the Piazzale Roma. This is slightly cheaper than the private garages but tends to fill up with local residents' cars. From here, you can take a *vaporetto* to the Piazza San Marco or--better yet--walk and enjoy the sights along the way.

Tronchetto, an artificial island with its own ramp leading off from the causeway before you reach the Piazzale Roma. Once you've parked, you can take a *vaporetto* across to the city.

In the unlikely event that you're staying at a hotel on the Lido and want to take your car with you, head for Tronchetto as you approach the end of the causeway and take the *automezzo*, or car ferry, to the Lido. The ferry isn't cheap, but it's worth it if your hotel has free parking or if you plan to return to the mainland via the isthmus road to Chioggia.

- For more information on reaching Venice and the Lido by automobile see the Comune di Venezia web site: <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/119>

By Ship

Venice Cruise Terminal

Most cruise ships arrive at either the **Marittima** terminal buildings (see photo above) or the secondary **San Basilio** pier (inset photo), which caters mostly to smaller cruise ships and river vessels. From either pier, you can take a land taxi to the Piazzale Roma (with its *vaporetto* ticket office and boat landings) or to the airport. You can also walk to the Piazzale Roma from Marittima or--more conveniently--along the Zattere and into the historic center from San Basilio.

Occasionally, river boats and other very small ships will moor on the *Riva* or waterfront promenade next to Venice's public gardens above the Piazza San Marco. This is a great location, since you can easily walk along the water to the Piazza San Marco in about 15 minutes without getting lost.

Reaching Venice Lido

The main waterbus lines reaching Venice Lido are 51, 52, R, B, 61 and 61; avoid line 1, it is the slowest.

Additional explanations about the waterbuses (*vaporetti*) can be found through the link: <http://maps.venicexplorer.net/venice-mapquest/index.php>

You can look for "waterbus stops" in Venice Lido: select on the left "Venice Transport" --> ACTV stops and timetables --> select "Lido" and leave "Name" blank. All the waterbus stops will appear, with number and location, just clicking on the map link.

Connection between Venice Airport and Venice Lido through the "Alilaguna" service

<http://www.alilaguna.it/?lang=en&funzione=1&contesto=1&valore=8&modo=6> (timetable and map, from Venice airport to Venice, Venice Lido, etc.)

The ticket (one way) costs Euro 12 (Venice Airport-Venice Lido); if the "Venice card" is bought (it allows for using public transports -and some private ones- for free), the cost of the Alilaguna ticket is about 50% reduced <http://www.hellovenezia.com/jsp/en/venicecardtariffe/index.jsp>

Waterbus routes from Venice to Venice Lido



Venice Local Transportation

Getting Around Venice

For the most part, transportation within Venice consists of a sturdy pair of rubber-soled shoes or Birkenstocks. Distances are short, although they'll often seem much longer since you're bound to get lost whenever you venture off the well-marked central pedestrian routes.

Still, there are times when you'll want to take to the water, so here's how to cruise the *canali* without bruising your pocketbook:

Waterbus

The public boats called *vaporetti* and *motoscafi* run almost constantly, and you'll seldom have to wait more than a few minutes for one to come along.

The waterbus you'll use most often is the No. 1, the local that stops 13 times between the Piazzale Roma and the Piazza San Marco. (For details on boat routes, see the [ACTV](http://www.actv.it/english/home.php) web site <http://www.actv.it/english/home.php>)

The standard waterbus or autobus fare is a painfully steep €6. However, you can save money with a 1-, 3-, or 7-day [Venice Card](http://www.hellovenezia.com/jsp/en/venicecard/index.jsp) (see <http://www.hellovenezia.com/jsp/en/venicecard/index.jsp>).

Water taxi

The sleek, wood-trimmed water taxis of Venice are priced for the limousine crowd, with extra fees for radio-dispatched service, trips after 10 p.m., and Sunday travel. Warning: aquatic cabs don't have meters, so know what you're paying before the skipper casts off.



Gondola

The gondolas of Venice are beautiful but expensive. The city of Venice sets official rates for gondola rides, which started at €80 for 40 minutes the last time I checked. Additional 20-minute increments are €40. After 7 p.m., the base rate climbs to €100, with €50 for an additional 2 minutes. Up to six people can share a gondola.

Traghetto

With only a handful of bridges crossing the Grand Canal's four-kilometer length, Venetians rely on gondola ferries called *traghetti* at seven points between the railroad station and the Santa Maria della Salute church. Follow the yellow gondola signs down to the water, where you'll pay only a small fee to reach the other side.

Tips for moving around:

1. At smaller stops, boats will come from both directions. Pay attention so you'll board the right waterbus!
2. Occasionally, a boat will ignore certain stops or will terminate its run before the end of the line. The placard or electronic signboard on the boat will indicate any such deviations.
3. Some lines are defined as "summer only," but "summer" usually means April through October on the Venice tourist calendar.
4. Routes marked with the  icon are easily wheelchair-accessible (e.g., with *vaporetti* that have flat or single-level decks) Routes marked * have at least some wheelchair-accessible boats (e.g., new *motoscafi* on the *circolare* routes that have covered wheelchair positions and belts on the entrance deck).
5. Actv (the Venice public transportation system) has a free printed timetable (*orario*) that you can request at any ticket booth. Actv also has a Web site (<http://www.actv.it/>) with a journey planner that's reasonably convenient if you know your departure and arrival stops.
6. If you board at a stop that doesn't have a ticket office, approach the conductor immediately after boarding and ask for a *biglietto*. Otherwise, you could be fined heavily for traveling without a ticket.
7. Be sure to validate your ticket before boarding the boat. Simply insert it in the yellow ticket machine near the floating platform, and the ticket will be stamped automatically. If you're using a travel card (see below), validate the card the first time it's used.
8. You can save money on public transportation by purchasing a 12- to 72-hour travel card from any Actv ticket booth. Another (and slightly more expensive) option is the Venice Card, which is available in 1-, 3-, or 7-day versions and includes benefits such as admission to city-owned museums and free use of public toilets.
9. For convenience, "*vaporetto*" is often used as a generic synonym for "water bus," but technically there are three types of boat: the "*vaporetto*," a flat-decked boat used on routes such as No. 1 (Grand Canal) and No. 2; the "*motoscafo*" (used for routes that go into the Lagoon; see photo at top of page); and the "*motonave*" (a large double-decked vessel that looks like a ship and is used for commuter service to the Lido, Punta Sabioni, and Treporti).

The No. 82 express line is now the No. 2, and the old No. 3 summer express is gone, having been replaced by a No. 3 route for Venice residents only.

