

Tips for Travellers – Markets and Supermarkets

To me, shopping (or at least browsing) in the markets and the supermarkets in Italy gives a great insight in to their culture. If you are staying in an apartment then it makes great sense to make some meals at home and to have some meals at local restaurants.

The range of delicacies at the markets is endless. I have found that even if you don't know exactly what something is, then the stallholders are more than happy to explain what it is and sometimes give you a taste. Who could resist fresh pasta and pesto or duck breasts stuffed with truffles or some fresh prosciutto and mozzarella?

The supermarkets have a great range of goods from all over the EU. Vegetables are clearly labelled with what country they have originated from. Care needs to be taken with the hours of opening of the shops. The supermarkets often open at 0845 and close at 1245 and then reopen from 1600 until 1930. The supermarkets are open only for limited hours on a Sunday, so if you are arriving on a Sunday, make sure that you bring something with you for dinner that night or be prepared to eat out.

It is Italian law that there is a charge for plastic bags in supermarkets. These are not expensive but if you always have a reusable cloth bag with you, then you will be prepared. Supermarkets stock a wide range of alcohol and chocolates – usually at prices much cheaper than duty free. Supermarkets do not carry any pharmaceuticals and paracetamol and aspirin must be purchased at a pharmacy – at pharmacy prices!

Most towns will have a local market that is held every Wednesday or Thursday morning in one of the large piazzas and they sell fruit and vegetables, clothing and other odds and ends.

Packaged food such as panforte can be brought back in to Australia as long as they are declared to Customs.

Happy shopping.