

RICK STEVES' FRENCH, ITALIAN & GERMAN PHRASE BOOK

*Three Languages for European Travel: Essential Travel Phrases &
Culture Tips*

By Rick Steves

Rick Steves' Europe Travel Series

Practical, Traveller-Tested Language Guides for Independent Minds

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Preface: Language as a Tool for Connection

"By speaking a few words of the native tongue, you show respect, break down barriers, and open doors to rich, unforgettable experiences that tourists who stick strictly to English completely miss out on." — Rick Steves

Welcome to the ultimate companion for your European adventure. This phrase book compiles the three most vital Western European languages—French, Italian, and German—into one comprehensive, pocket-sized structural guide. Designed specifically for the independent, budget-minded traveller, this book ignores dry academic grammar rules in favor of street-smart, practical utility.

In these pages, you won't find dynamic literary breakdowns or classical prose. Instead, you'll get the exact words needed to check into a family-run pension, buy a point-to-point train ticket, order regional specialties with confidence, and gracefully handle minor emergencies. Every single phrase is paired with an intuitive, phonetic pronunciation guide based on simple English sounds—no complicated linguistic symbols required.

How to Use This Book

This guide is structurally split into three distinct, comprehensive language sections. Each section follows an identical chronological path through your journey, covering:

- **The Basics:** Key greetings, politeness markers, and conversational survival words.
- **Arrival & Transport:** Navigating train stations, airports, local buses, and regional transit systems.
- **Finding Accommodation:** Checking in, asking about amenities, and settling bills.
- **Food & Drink:** Deciphering menus, ordering drinks, and settling the tab with absolute ease.
- **Shopping & Sightseeing:** Exploring open-air markets, buying museum entrance passes, and asking for prices.
- **Handling Emergencies:** Crucial medical, mechanical, and safety phrases.
- **Numbers & Time:** Essential structural frameworks for dates, hours, and financial transactions.

Don't be afraid to mispronounce things! Locals everywhere appreciate the effort far more than they demand flawless syntax. Smile, give it your best shot, and let the adventure begin.

PART I: FRENCH PHRASE BOOK

1. Core Essentials & Small Talk

In France, politeness is paramount. Always begin an interaction with a clear *Bonjour* before asking a question. It is the golden key to pleasant service.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
Hello / Good day	Bonjour	bohn-zhoor
Good evening	Bonsoir	bohn-swahr
Goodbye	Au revoir	oh rwahv-wahr
Please	S'il vous plaît	see voo pleh
Thank you (very much)	Merci (beaucoup)	mair-see (boh-koo)
You're welcome	De rien	duh ree-ahn
Yes / No	Oui / Non	wee / nohn
Excuse me (to get past)	Pardon	pahr-dohn
Excuse me (to ask a question)	Excusez-moi	ex-koo-zay mwah
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais ?	pahr-lay voo-z ahng-leh
I don't understand.	Je ne comprends pas.	zhuh nuh coh-m-prahn pah
Could you speak slower?	Plus lentement, s'il vous plaît.	ploo lahnt-mahn see voo pleh
My name is...	Je m'appelle...	zhuh mah-pell
How are you?	Comment ça va ?	coh-mahn sah vah
Fine, thank you.	Ça va bien, merci.	sah vah bee-ahn mair-see

Rick's Tip: Never dive directly into English with a shopkeeper. Start with a warm "*Bonjour, Madame*" or "*Bonjour, Monsieur*", pause for their response, then politely ask, "*Parlez-vous anglais?*" This tiny sign of respect completely changes their demeanor.

2. Arrival & Transport

Navigating the French railway network (SNCF) or the Parisian Metro is incredibly efficient once you understand the core terminology.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
Where is...?	Où est... ?	oo eh
Where are the toilets?	Où sont les toilettes ?	oo sohn lay twah-let
The train station	La gare	lah gahr
The bus stop	L'arrêt de bus	lah-ray duh boos
A ticket to...	Un billet pour...	uhn bee-yeh poor
Round-trip	Aller-retour	ah-lay ruh-toor
One-way	Aller simple	ah-lay sahm-pluh
What time does it leave?	À quelle heure part-il ?	ah kell ur pahr-teel
Track number...	Voie...	vwah
Is this seat taken?	Est-ce que cette place est prise ?	ess kuh sett plahs eh preez
Left / Right	À gauche / À droite	ah gohsh / ah drwaht
Straight ahead	Tout droit	too drwah
Taxi stop	Station de taxi	stah-see-ohn duh tahk-see

Rick's Tip: Before boarding any train in France, you must validate your paper ticket in the yellow or orange machines (labeled *Compostage de billets*) located at the entrance to the platforms. Failure to stamp it results in an immediate fine.

3. Finding Accommodation

Whether staying in a boutique Parisian hotel or a quiet countryside gîte, clear terms help avoid billing surprises.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
I have a reservation.	J'ai une réservation.	zhay oon ray-zair-vah-see-ohn
Do you have a room?	Avez-vous une chambre ?	ah-vay voo-z oon shahm-bruh
For one person / two people	Pour une / deux personnes	poor oon / duh pair-sun
With a bathroom	Avec salle de bain	ah-vek sahl duh bahn
With one double bed	Avec un grand lit	ah-vek uhn grahn lee
With twin beds	Avec deux lits jumeaux	ah-vek duh lee zhoo-moh
How much is it per night?	Combien coûte la nuit ?	cohm-bee-ahn coot lah nwee
Is breakfast included?	Est-ce que le petit déjeuner est inclus ?	ess kuh luh puh-tee day-zhuh-nay eh tahn-kloo
May I see the room?	Puis-je voir la chambre ?	pwee-zh vwahr lah shahm-bruh
It's fine. I'll take it.	C'est bon, je la prends.	say bohn, zhuh lah prahn
The key, please.	La clé, s'il vous plaît.	lah klay, see voo pleh
Check-out time	L'heure du départ	lur doo day-pahr

4. Food & Drink

Dining out is an art form in France. Take your time, enjoy the courses, and make sure you understand the standard layout of a French menu.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
A table for two	Une table pour deux	oon tah-bluh poor duh
The menu, please	La carte, s'il vous plaît	lah kahrt, see voo pleh
Fixed-price option	Le menu / Le formule	luh muh-noo / lah for-mool
Appetizer / Main course	Entrée / Plat principal	ahn-tray / blah prahn-see-pahl
Cheese / Dessert	Fromage / Dessert	froh-mahzh / day-zair
Tap water	Une carafe d'eau	oon kah-rahf doh
Red / White wine	Vin rouge / blanc	vahn roozh / blahn
The bill, please	L'addition, s'il vous plaît	lah-dee-see-ohn, see voo pleh
Is service included?	Le service est-il compris ?	luh sair-vees eh-teel coh-m-pree
Delicious!	C'était délicieux !	say-teh day-lee-syuh

DECIPHERING FRENCH MENUS

Boeuf Bourguignon: Beef stewed in rich red Burgundy wine.

Confit de Canard: Crisp, slow-cooked duck leg in its own rendered fat.

Escargots: Snails typically prepared with garlic, parsley, and butter.

Croque-Monsieur: Toasted ham and cheese sandwich slathered with Béchamel sauce.

5. Shopping & Sightseeing

From museum hopping to browsing local open-air markets, here are the essential interactions you will need.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
How much does this cost?	Combien ça coûte ?	cohm-bee-ahn sah coot
It's too expensive.	C'est trop cher.	say troh shair
I'm just looking.	Je regarde seulement.	zhuh ruh-gahrd suhl-mahn
Do you accept credit cards?	Acceptez-vous les cartes de crédit ?	ahk-sep-tay voo lay kahrt duh cray-dee
At what time does it open/close?	À quelle heure ouvre/ferme-t-il ?	ah kell ur oo-vruh / fairm teel
One adult ticket	Un billet adulte	uhn bee-yeh ah-doolt
Discount / Student ticket	Tarif réduit / Étudiant	tah-reef ray-dwee / ay-too-dee-ahn
Free admission	Entrée libre	ahn-tray lee-bruh

6. Numbers & Time

1: un (uhn)	2: deux (duh)	3: trois (trwah)	4: quatre (kat-ruh)
5: cinq (sahnk)	6: six (sees)	7: sept (set)	8: huit (wheet)
9: neuf (nuhf)	10: dix (dees)	20: vingt (vahn)	30: trente (trahnt)
40: quarante (kah-rahnt)	50: cinquante (sahn-kahnt)	100: cent (sahn)	1000: mille (meel)

7. Handling Emergencies

No one expects trouble, but being equipped with these clear phrases ensures you get help immediately when it matters most.

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
Help!	Au secours !	oh suh-koor
Please call a doctor.	Appelez un médecin, s'il vous plaît.	ah-play uhn mayd-sahn, see voo pleh
Call an ambulance.	Appelez une ambulance.	ah-play oon ahm-boo-lahnhs
Call the police.	Appelez la police.	ah-play lah poh-lees
I am lost.	Je suis perdu(e).	zhuh swee pair-doo
I am sick.	Je suis malade.	zhuh swee mah-lahd
Where is the pharmacy?	Où est la pharmacie ?	oo eh lah fahr-mah-see
Stop!	Arrêtez !	ah-reh-tay
I lost my passport.	J'ai perdu mon passeport.	zhay pair-doo mohn pahs-pohr

Emergency Numbers Note: Throughout the European Union, dialing **112** from any telephone connecting system links you directly to comprehensive emergency services (Ambulance, Fire, and Police) entirely free of charge.

PART II: ITALIAN PHRASE BOOK

1. Core Essentials & Small Talk

Italians love interaction. Speaking their language with expressive hand gestures and a broad smile is the absolute best passport to deep cultural experiences.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Hello / Goodbye (informal)	Ciao	chah-oh
Good morning / Hello	Buongiorno	bwon-zhor-no
Good evening	Buonasera	bwoh-nah-say-rah
Goodbye (formal)	Arrivederci	ah-ree-veh-dair-chee
Please	Per favore	pair fah-voh-ray
Thank you (very much)	Grazie (mille)	grah-tsee-ay (mee-lay)
You're welcome	Prego	preh-goh
Yes / No	Sì / No	see / noh
Excuse me (to get attention)	Scusi	skoo-zee
Excuse me (to push past)	Permesso	pair-mess-oh
Do you speak English?	Parla inglese?	pahr-lah een-glai-zay
I don't understand.	Non capisco.	nohn kah-pee-skoh
Where is...?	Dov'è...?	doh-veh
My name is...	Mi chiamo...	mee kee-ah-moh
How are you?	Come sta?	coh-may stah

Rick's Tip: Use *Scusi* for general interactions when addressing a stranger politely. If you are physically squeezing through a tightly packed crowd on a public bus or Roman metro line, say *Permesso*.

2. Arrival & Transport

Italy's rail network, run by Trenitalia and Italo, is incredibly robust. Knowing basic layout terms keeps transit easy.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Where is the train station?	Dov'è la stazione?	doh-veh lah stah-tsee-oh-nay
Where are the toilets?	Dove sono i bagni?	doh-vay soh-noh ee bahn-yee
A ticket to...	Un biglietto per...	oon beel-yet-toh pair
One-way / Round-trip	Solo andata / Andata e ritorno	soh-loh ahn-dah-tah / ee-tor-noh
What track?	Quale binario?	kwah-lay bee-nah-ree-oh
Is the train on time?	Il treno è in orario?	eel tray-noh eh een oh-rah-ree-oh
Is this seat free?	È libero questo posto?	eh lee-bair-oh kwehs-toh pohs-toh
Bus stop	Fermata dell'autobus	fair-mah-tah dell-ow-toh-boos
Left / Right	A sinistra / A destra	ah see-nees-trah / ah dehs-trah
Straight ahead	Sempre dritto	sem-pray dreet-toh

Rick's Tip: Just like in France, you must stamp your paper regional train tickets in Italy before boarding. Look for the small green-and-white machines near tracks and stamp them (*convalidare*) to avoid stiff onboard fines.

3. Finding Accommodation

From cozy Tuscan farm stays (*Agriturismo*) to historic urban hotels, use these terms to clarify room details.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
I have a reservation.	Ho una prenotazione.	oh oo-nah pray-noh-tah-tsee-oh-nay
Do you have a room?	Ha una camera?	ah oo-nah kah-mair-ah
For one night / two nights	Per una notte / due notti	pair oo-nah not-tay / doo-ay not-tee
Single / Double room	Camera singola / doppia	kah-mair-ah seen-goh-lah / dop-pyah
With air conditioning	Con aria condizionata	cohn ah-ree-ah cohn-dee-tsee-oh-nah-tah
With private bathroom	Con bagno privato	cohn bahn-yoh pree-vah-toh
How much does it cost?	Quanto costa?	kwan-toh cohstah
Is breakfast included?	La colazione è inclusa?	lah coh-lah-tsee-oh-nay eh een-kloo-zah
The key, please	La chiave, per favore	lah kee-ah-vay, pair fah-voh-ray
Can I leave my bags here?	Posso lasciare i bagagli qui?	pohs-soh lah-shahr-ay ee bah-gahl-yee kwee

4. Food & Drink

In Italy, eating is a celebratory ritual. Italian menus follow a distinct structure that moves across multiple complete courses.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
A table for two, please	Un tavolo per due, per favore	oon tah-voh-loh pair doo-ay
The menu, please	Il menu, per favore	eel meh-noo, pair fah-voh-ray
House wine (red/white)	Vino della casa (rosso/bianco)	vee-noh dell-ah kah-zah (rohs-soh/bee-ahn-koh)
A bottle of water	Una bottiglia di acqua	oo-nah bot-teel-yah dee ahk-wah
Sparkling / Still water	Frizzante / Naturale	freet-tsahn-tay / nah-too-rah-lay
The bill, please	Il conto, per favore	eel cohn-toh, pair fah-voh-ray
Is service included?	Il servizio è incluso?	eel sair-vee-tsee-oh eh een-kloo-zoh
It was delicious	Era delizioso	eh-rah day-leet-tsee-oh-zoh

DECIPHERING THE ITALIAN MEAL STRUCTURE

Antipasto: Appetizers featuring cured meats, bruschetta, and marinated vegetables.

Primo Piatto: The first course, typically pasta, risotto, or soup.

Secondo Piatto: The main meat or fish course (remember to order side dishes or *Contorni* separately!).

Dolce: Dessert, featuring regional specialties like Tiramisù or Panna Cotta.

5. Shopping & Sightseeing

Explore artisan leather shops and historic piazzas while confidently navigating transactions.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
How much is this?	Quanto costa questo?	kwan-toh coh-s-tah kweh-s-toh
Can I pay by card?	Posso pagare con la carta?	pohs-soh pah-gahr-ay cohn lah kahr-tah
What time does it close?	A che ora chiude?	ah kay oh-rah kee-oo-day
Two tickets, please	Due biglietti, per favore	doo-ay beel-yet-tee pair fah-voh-ray
Where is the museum?	Dov'è il museo?	doh-veh eel moo-zeh-oh
Where is the church?	Dov'è la chiesa?	doh-veh lah kee-ay-zah

6. Numbers & Time

1: uno (oo-noh)	2: due (doo-ay)	3: tre (tray)	4: quattro (kwat-roh)
5: cinque (cheen-kway)	6: sei (say)	7: sette (set-tay)	8: otto (ot-toh)
9: nove (noh-vay)	10: dieci (dee-ay-chee)	20: venti (ven-tee)	30: trenta (tren-tah)
40: quaranta (kwah-rahn-tah)	50: cinquanta (cheen-kwan-tah)	100: cento (chen-toh)	1000: mille (meel-lay)

7. Handling Emergencies

Stay safe in crowded public spaces by keeping these clear urgent requests in mind.

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Help!	Aiuto!	ah-yoo-toh
Call a doctor!	Chiami un medico!	kee-ah-mee oon meh-dee-coh
Call the police!	Chiami la polizia!	kee-ah-mee lah poh-leet-tsee-ah
I feel sick.	Mi sento male.	mee sen-toh mah-lay
Where is the pharmacy?	Dov'è la farmacia?	doh-veh lah fahr-mah-chee-ah
Stop thief!	Al ladro!	ahl lah-droh
I am lost.	Mi sono perso/a.	mee soh-noh lair-soh / sah

Rick's Tip on Pickpockets: Popular tourist sites like Rome's Colosseum or Florence's Duomo are hunting grounds for skilled pickpockets. If someone bumps into you aggressively, check your gear immediately and yell "*Al ladro!*" loudly to draw public attention.

PART III: GERMAN PHRASE BOOK

1. Core Essentials & Small Talk

German culture highly values order, structure, and direct communication. Politeness is foundational, but brevity is appreciated.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
Hello / Good day	Guten Tag	goot-en tahg
Good evening	Guten Abend	goot-en ah-bent
Goodbye	Auf Wiedersehen	owf vee-der-zay-en
Please / You're welcome	Bitte	bit-teh
Thank you (very much)	Danke (schön)	dahn-keh (shuhn)
Yes / No	Ja / Nein	yah / nine
Excuse me (to get attention)	Entschuldigung	ent-shool-dee-goong
Do you speak English?	Sprechen Sie Englisch?	shpreh-khen zee eng-lish
I don't understand.	Ich verstehe nicht.	ikh fer-shtay-eh nikht
Could you speak slower?	Können Sie langsamer sprechen?	kuhn-en zee lahng-sahm-er shpreh-khen
Where is...?	Wo ist...?	voh eest
My name is...	Ich heiße...	ikh hye-seh
How are you?	Wie geht es Ihnen?	vee gayt es ee-nen

Rick's Tip: The versatile word *Bitte* serves multiple roles. It means "please" when asking for something, "you're welcome" when thanked, and can even mean "pardon me?" if you didn't hear someone clearly.

2. Arrival & Transport

The German rail network (Deutsche Bahn) is famously precise. Knowing structural terms keeps transitions fluid.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
Where is the train station?	Wo ist der Bahnhof?	voh eest dair bahn-hohf
Where are the toilets?	Wo sind die Toiletten?	voh zint dee toy-let-en
A ticket to...	Eine Fahrkarte nach...	eye-neh fahr-kahr-teh nakh
One-way / Round-trip	Einfach / Hin und zurück	ein-fakh / heen oont tsoo-rook
What platform?	Welches Gleis?	vel-khes glyse
Does this train stop in...?	Hält dieser Zug in...?	helt dee-zer tsoog een
Is this seat free?	Ist dieser Platz frei?	eest dee-zer plahts fry
Left / Right	Links / Rechts	lehnks / rekhts
Straight ahead	Geradeaus	geh-rah-deh-ows

Rick's Tip: Platforms in German train stations are called *Gleis*. Keep an eye out for detailed physical composition diagrams (*Wagenstandsanzeiger*) displayed on the platforms to see exactly where your specific coach number will stop.

3. Finding Accommodation

From cozy alpine guesthouses (*Gasthof*) to modern business hotels, clear logistics prevent confusion.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
I have a reservation.	Ich habe eine Reservierung.	ikh hah-beh eye-neh rez-er-veer-oong
Do you have a room?	Haben Sie ein Zimmer frei?	hah-ben zee ein tsim-er fry
Single / Double room	Einzelzimmer / Doppelzimmer	ein-tsel-tsim-er / dop-pel-tsim-er
With a shower / toilet	Mit Dusche / WC	meet doo-sheh / vay-tsee
How much is it per night?	Wie viel kostet das pro Nacht?	vee feel cohs-tet dahs proh nakht
Is breakfast included?	Ist das Frühstück inklusive?	eest dahs froo-shtook een-kloo-zee-veh
The key, please	Den Schlüssel, bitte	dayn shloos-sel, bit-teh
At what time is check-out?	Wann ist die Abreise?	vahn eest dee ahp-rye-zeh

4. Food & Drink

German dining is hearty and social. Sharing long wooden tables in beer halls is standard, so feel free to mix with locals.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
A table for two, please	Ein Tisch für zwei, bitte	ein tish foor tsvye, bit-teh
The menu, please	Die Speisekarte, bitte	dee shpy-zeh-kahr-teh, bit-teh
A beer, please	Ein Bier, bitte	ein beer, bit-teh
Tap water	Leitungswasser	lye-toongs-vahs-er
The bill, please	Die Rechnung, bitte	dee rekh-noong, bit-teh
Together / Separately	Zusammen / Getrennt	tsoo-zahm-en / geh-trent
Enjoy your meal!	Guten Appetit!	goot-en ah-peh-teet

DECIPHERING GERMAN BEER HALL MENUS

Schnitzel: Thin, tenderized, breaded, and pan-fried meat cutlet.

Sauerkraut: Finely shredded cabbage fermented in traditional sour brine.

Bratwurst: Spiced, pan-seared regional German pork sausage.

Käsespätzle: Fresh, soft egg noodles tossed with melted alpine cheese and caramelized onions.

5. Shopping & Sightseeing

Whether paying at an eco-market or buying museum passes, precise interactions prevent delays.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
How much does that cost?	Wie viel kostet das?	vee feel coh-s-tet dahs
Do you accept credit cards?	Nehmen Sie Kreditkarten?	nay-men zee kreh-deet-kahr-ten
When does it open/close?	Wann öffnet/schließt es?	vahn uhf-net / shleest es
Two adult tickets	Zwei Fahrkarten für Erwachsene	tsvye fahr-kahr-ten foor er-vakh-seh-neh
Where is the exit?	Wo ist der Ausgang?	voh eest dair ows-gahng

6. Numbers & Time

1: eins (ines)	2: zwei (tsvye)	3: drei (dry)	4: vier (feer)
5: fünf (foonf)	6: sechs (zekhs)	7: sieben (zee-ben)	8: acht (akht)
9: neun (noyn)	10: zehn (tsayn)	20: zwanzig (tsvahn-tsikh)	30: dreißig (dry-sikh)
40: vierzig (feer-tsikh)	50: fünfzig (foof-tsikh)	100: hundert (hoon-dert)	1000: tausend (tow-zent)

7. Handling Emergencies

Keep these highly authoritative phrases ready for immediate medical or logistics help.

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
Help!	Hilfe!	heel-feh
Call a doctor!	Rufen Sie einen Arzt!	roo-fen zee eye-nen ahrst
Call the police!	Rufen Sie die Polizei!	roo-fen zee dee poh-leet-sye
I am sick.	Ich bin krank.	ikh been krahnk
Where is the pharmacy?	Wo ist die Apotheke?	voh eest dee ah-poh-tay-keh
Stop!	Halt!	hahlt
I lost my bag.	Ich habe meine Tasche verloren.	ikh hah-beh my-neh tah-sheh fer-lor-en

Rick's Final Word: Traveling isn't about perfectly parsing syntax; it's about connecting with people. Armed with this multi-language guide, go forth boldly, make mistakes, and embrace the beautiful challenges of independent exploration!