

TOP RISKS: opportunistic theft (pickpocketing, bag snatching, luggage theft), especially in dense crowds and on public transport; weather-related medical emergencies; tourist scams and card fraud

PICKPOCKETING: HIGHEST RISK AREAS

1. **Milano Centrale:** concourses, ticket machines, escalators, platforms, metro link
2. **Duomo / Piazza del Duomo** and **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II:** expect shoulder-to-shoulder foot traffic
3. **Metro interchanges** around the city center, by doors, escalators, and crush zones
4. **Navigli** during evenings and aperitivo hours; expect dense foot traffic
5. **Major shopping arteries** near the center - e.g., around **Via Torino / Corso Vittorio Emanuele II**

COMMON PICKPOCKETING TACTICS



- **Door pinch on metro or tram:** someone blocks your exit while their partner steals from you
- **Distraction clustering:** a group “accidentally” bumps into you, asks a question, drops something, or crowds you at a choke point
- **Escalator or lift squeeze:** one person presses behind you while another pickpockets you

PICKPOCKETING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- ✓ **No valuables in outer pockets**, including zipped jacket pockets if heading into heavy pedestrian traffic
- ✓ **Carry a cross-body bag worn in front** with the zipper closed; keep a hand on the zipper in dense crowds
- ✓ **Phone discipline:** always secure your phone, especially near station doors and escalators
- ✓ **Platform and doorway rule:** step aside from doors, check surroundings, then board or exit
- ✓ **Team travel:** assign roles among your group – e.g., navigator, bag-watcher – when moving through hubs

Most thefts happen in transition – during ticketing, on escalators, in front of doors, etc. If you’re carrying luggage: **hold onto it and keep it in front of you**, especially at Centrale and other interchanges.

TAXIS & RIDESHARE

If using **official taxis** (typically white, marked TAXI), **ensure the meter is running** unless you’ve agreed a legitimate fixed fare. This reduces “no-meter” disputes common in many tourist areas.

Rideshare options:

- **AppTaxi (Cab Milan):** Another local taxi-booking app that lets you request nearby cabs, choose vehicle options (size, luggage, pets), and pay with card directly in the app
- **Bolt:** European ride-hailing platform available in Milan; offers on-demand rides and sometimes lower fares than traditional taxis
- **FreeNow:** A widely used ride-hailing/taxi app in Milan that connects you with licensed taxis quickly and lets you pay in-app with card or digital wallets; drivers have ratings and your trip status is visible
- **Uber (taxi via app):** Uber works in Milan primarily as a taxi-booking tool matching you with licensed taxi drivers rather than typical ride-sharing drivers; lets you request rides 24/7 and pay cashless

Note: true peer-to-peer Uber-style driver systems are limited, as drivers generally must hold a full taxi or NCC (chauffeur) license under Italian law. Many apps in Milan are essentially taxi aggregators: they book licensed taxis for you with app convenience.

Apps are generally reliable near major transport hubs (stations, airports) but surge pricing or wait times can occur during peak event hours (e.g., Olympics). Some apps have additional options like pre-booking in advance, which can be helpful for airport transfers.

EMERGENCIES & MEDICAL CARE: LOMBARDY / MILAN



112 — single emergency number (police, fire, medical)

116 or 117 — **non-urgent medical advice / continuity of care**, useful nights and weekends; they can direct you to an on-call doctor or clinic

Private clinics (search for *centro medico privato*): widely available in Milan; faster access than public hospitals, staffed by English-speaking providers. Suitable for flu, infections, prescriptions, minor injuries. Payment is usually out-of-pocket; receipts provided for insurance.

For major fractures, sprains, or injuries that are not life-threatening: go to a **hospital emergency department (pronto soccorso)**. You will be triaged; non-urgent cases may involve long waits. Imaging is available if clinically indicated. A **private clinic with imaging may be faster** for suspected minor fractures.

For dental needs (pain, broken tooth, infection): use a **private dental clinic (studio dentistico)**. Many clinics accept same-day urgent appointments. Dental care is not covered by public emergency services except for severe trauma. Hotels can usually recommend an English-speaking dentist nearby.

Pharmacies (often overlooked but very useful, search for *farmacia*) are abundant and staffed by English-speaking pharmacists who can advise on flu symptoms, minor wounds, pain relief, etc. They can also direct you to the nearest open doctor or clinic. For night and weekend service, search for *farmacia di turno*.

If you have **respiratory sensitivities**, monitor air quality and limit exposure near major roads during peaks of pollution as city winter weather can aggravate symptoms.

COMMON TOURIST SCAMS

Taxi or transfer overcharging: drivers near airports, ferry ports, or major stations quote inflated fares (“because of traffic”). Use official taxi apps or agreed flat rates.

SIM card price switch: some third-party vendors quote inflated prices for SIM cards, claiming the cheaper price is “only online.” Buy directly from carrier shops or use a pre-loaded eSIM.

“Free gift” scam: someone offers you a free bracelet, flower, or birdseed in a busy tourist zone (e.g., near the Duomo). Once taken, they insist you pay for it. Avoid accepting gifts; if a stranger tries to touch you, ignore them and walk away.

“Shell game” / dice game: a street gambling trick often staged near tourist hotspots (e.g., around Castello Sforzesco). “Winners” are in on it, while earnest participants lose money. Don’t stop to watch or participate.

Fake tour guide / ticket seller: individuals offer skip-the-line access or cheaper tickets that are invalid or bogus. Buy tickets online in advance or only via official vendors.

“Helpful” vendor or porter fee scam: someone offers help with bags or directions and then *demands a tip*. Common at stations / transit access points. Politely decline help you don’t ask for, but be prepared to pay if you do.



- **High-traffic tourist areas** (Duomo, Castello Sforzesco, major piazzas, train stations) are where many of these tactics show up
- Most scams revolve around **distraction, unsolicited help, or forced payment** after acceptance of an item
- The **best defenses** are **awareness, controlled body language, and not engaging with strangers** offering unsolicited gifts or help

Safe travels! ❄️ Cordially, Terrain 9