



# "Ho volato a Roma"

## Why this sounds wrong in Italian — and what to say instead

By Sarah • [italianochiaro.com](http://italianochiaro.com)

There is one mistake I hear almost every week from my students. Not the subjunctive, not irregular verbs, not gender agreement.

It's movement verbs.

Specifically: translating "I flew to Rome" as "Ho volato a Roma" — or "I drove to work" as "Ho guidato al lavoro."

Both sound odd to a native Italian. Not incomprehensible — just immediately wrong. The fix is simple once you see the logic.

### The rule

#### WITH A DESTINATION

**andare + in/a + mezzo**

Sono andato a Roma in aereo.

#### ACTION ONLY (NO DESTINATION)

**specific verb**

Ho guidato per due ore.

## With a destination: andare + mezzo

The sentence is not "how I moved" but "I went... by..." One note: a piedi uses a, not in — the one exception.

I flew to Rome.	<b>Sono andato a Roma in aereo.</b>
She drove to Milan.	<b>È andata a Milano in macchina.</b>
We took the train to Florence.	<b>Siamo andati a Firenze in treno.</b>
He cycled to the office.	<b>È andato in ufficio in bicicletta.</b>
I walked to the market.	<b>Sono andato al mercato a piedi.</b>

## No destination: just the verb

The specific verbs — volare, guidare, camminare, pedalare — are perfectly correct. They describe the physical action itself, with no destination implied.

I drove for two hours.	<b>Ho guidato per due ore.</b>
She flew for seven hours.	<b>Ha volato per sette ore.</b>
We walked all afternoon.	<b>Abbiamo camminato tutto il pomeriggio.</b>
He cycled for an hour.	<b>Ha pedalato per un'ora.</b>

Notice what's missing in all of these: a destination. Once you see it, you can't unsee it.

**THE ONE QUESTION THAT FIXES EVERYTHING**

Do I have a destination?

Yes andare + in/a + mezzo

No the specific verb

## Common mistakes – side by side

Wrong	Correct
<b>Ho volato a Parigi.</b>	<b>Sono andato a Parigi in aereo.</b>
<b>Ho guidato al lavoro.</b>	<b>Sono andato al lavoro in macchina.</b>
<b>Ha camminato al mercato.</b>	<b>È andata al mercato a piedi.</b>
<b>Abbiamo preso il treno a Venezia.</b>	<b>Siamo andati a Venezia in treno.</b>

"Ho preso il treno" is fine on its own – "I took the train." But when saying where you went, use andare in treno.

## Mezzi di trasporto – quick reference

Italiano	English
<b>in aereo</b>	by plane
<b>in macchina</b>	by car
<b>in treno</b>	by train
<b>in autobus</b>	by bus
<b>in metropolitana</b>	by tube / metro
<b>in bicicletta</b>	by bike

<b>a piedi</b>	on foot
<b>in moto</b>	by motorbike
<b>in nave</b>	by boat / ferry
<b>in taxi</b>	by taxi

## Practice – try these sentences

### Quick test – translate these sentences

1 I flew to London yesterday.

**Ieri sono andato/a a Londra in aereo.**

2 I walked for two hours this morning.

**Stamattina ho camminato per due ore.**

3 She drove to the airport.

**È andata all'aeroporto in macchina.**

4 We cycled all day.

**Abbiamo pedalato tutto il giorno.**

5 He took the ferry to Sicily.

**È andato in Sicilia in nave.**

At B1 you might hear "Ho preso l'aereo per Roma" – perfect never hear is "Ho volato a Roma" as a plain statement of fact is automatic. Then you can start bending it.

### THE SUMMARY

GOING SOMEWHERE?

JUST THE ACTION?

## Free reference sheet

One printable page: the rule, all the vocabulary, practice sentences.

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### **Sarah – Italiano Chiaro**

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