

RIVIERA-LA SPEZIA

SITE-
SPECIFIC
GUIDE



ACADEMIC
STUDIES
ABROAD

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Pre-Departure

Please see our [Pre-Departure Guide for All Programs](#) for additional important pre-departure information!

Please add the important numbers to your phone

<p>ASA Office in Boston, MA Academic Studies Abroad 72 River Park Street, Suite 104 Needham, MA 02494 Tel: 617-327-9388 24-hour Emergency Cell: 857-366-6821 Email: hello@academicstudies.com Web: www.academicstudies.com</p>	<p>ASA Site Director in La Spezia: <i>Details coming soon!</i></p> <p>Cell Phone: +39</p> <p>If direct dialing from USA: 011 39</p> <p>If direct dialing from Italy:</p> <p>Email:</p>
<p>The closest U.S. Consulate is in Florence</p> <p><u>U.S. Consulate in Florence</u> Lungarno Vespucci, 38 50123 Florence Tel: +39 055 266 951</p>	<p>Emergency Ambulance: 112 Fire: 112 La Spezia Emergency Room: Via Mario Asso, 1 +39 018 75331 Police/Carabinieri: 112 <i>Police Station: Scalinata Fillia</i> +39 018 773 4074 <i>Carabinieri: Via dei Colli, 43</i> +39 018 773 9008</p> <p>FUA's Emergency Number (In case of emergency ONLY): +39 351 438 2517</p>

In an emergency, please contact your ASA Site Director immediately.
It is of utmost importance that you notify your Site Director of any problems, issues,
or concerns that you encounter while you're abroad.

Pre-Departure

Please add the important numbers to your phone

Florence University of the Arts (FUA)

Via Sant'Agostino, 46

19121 La Spezia SP Italy

Tel: +39 018 717 55001

Website: <http://www.fua.it/>

FUA's Emergency Number (In case of emergency ONLY):

+39 351 438 2517

English Speaking Doctors

International Health Florence (IFCA)

www.internationalhealthflorence.com

They provide assistance with different practices and they offer house call visits. International health insurance card required.

Print your CISI medical insurance card and put in your wallet! (This is emailed to you before departure.)

Other Useful Contacts

(Local numbers, as dialed in Italy)

Pharmacies:

Pharmacies in La Spezia

Farmacia Della Stazione (Via Fiume, 75) : +39 0187 706147

Farmacia Argentieri: (Via Vittorio Veneto 117): +39 0187 511179

Radio Taxi La Spezia: +39 0187 523523/+39 0187 523523

or find them at La Spezia Centrale train station.

Pisa Airport "Galileo Galilei": +39 050 849111 or +39 055 315874 or +39 050 849300

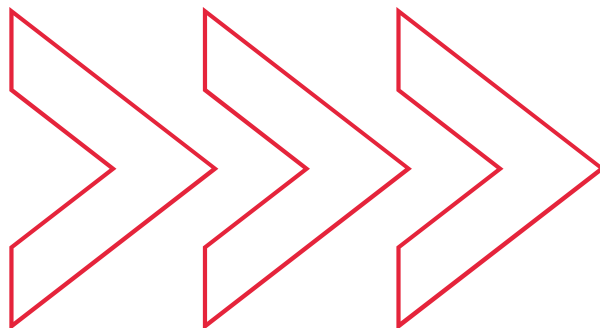
011 = International Dialing Code

39 = Italy Country Code

International Dialing Instructions



- To call from the U.S. to Italy, dial 011-39 + the local telephone number. For example, if the phone number is listed as (+39) 335 714 6082, you would dial 011 39 335 714 6082.
- To call the U.S. from Italy, dial 001 + area code and number.
- To call an Italian number within Italy, leave off the int'l code and country code (e.g. 335 714 6082).



Passport, Permit of Stay, STEP & ETA

All students must have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond the day you plan to return to the U.S.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A U.S. PASSPORT, PLEASE NOTIFY ASA IMMEDIATELY!

Non-U.S. citizens may have a different visa process than described below, that requires steps to be taken in the U.S. or your home country before you arrive in Italy.

What should I do if I lose my passport?

Contact the local police, the U.S. Embassy, and your Site Director immediately.

Having a photocopy of your passport on hand will make it MUCH easier to have it replaced.

Permit of Stay

SEMESTER students! To legalize your stay in Italy, you need to apply for a Permit of Stay by registering at the local police station in La Spezia **within 10 days of arrival** (cost: €136). Per Italian law, obtaining the Permit of Stay is **MANDATORY** for all semester students. FUA or ASA's Site Director will assist everyone with this process. The list of documents you must bring with you in order to get your Permit of Stay can be found on your **LAST-MINUTE CHECKLIST**.

STEP MANDATORY: YOU MUST ENROLL IN STEP

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) registration is **MANDATORY** to complete before departure. This free service, offered by the US Department of State, enables the DOS to quickly contact US citizens abroad during emergencies, such as natural disaster, civil unrest, or a family emergency. By registering, you also get real time updates about safety, security, health, and weather in country. Click this link to complete your STEP registration before departure: <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>

ETA: For visiting & transiting through England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

WHO: For Unites States (US) passport holders, the ETA is required for anyone traveling through the UK for study, visit, or transit through (layover), via any method of transportation (e.g. plane, train, boat). If you are traveling on a non-US passport, first check to see if you can apply for an ETA [here](#). If your country is not yet approved for the ETA, notify your ASA Program Manager immediately (617-327-9388) for next steps.

WHAT: The Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) is a permission to travel for those who do not currently need to obtain a visa or do not have a United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) immigration status. **The ETA is valid for two (2) years from date of issue, or until passport expires, whichever is sooner.** It is valid for multiple journeys and must be valid for the entirety of your stay. It cannot be extended.

The ETA is digitally linked to your passport. There is no physical component. While you are not required to show a paper copy, we highly recommend saving a screenshot and/or printing your ETA approval email and adding it to your acceptance documents for your records. You are required to send a copy of your ETA approval email to your ASA Program Manager. To see how to apply, read on.

HOW: Students apply for the ETA electronically via the [UK ETA app](#)

Application Steps:

1. Watch the short "Getting Started: Applying for the UK ETA" video.
2. Gather information for the ETA application (contact information, physical valid U.S. passport in hand, recent photo or headshot, method of payment). Your flight itinerary is not required to apply.
3. Follow the instructions on the app or the UK GOV website. We recommend applying and getting approval at least 1 week prior to arrival in the UK.
4. Once received, **SAVE** your UK ETA approval email as a pdf or jpeg. Be sure that it is legible and email a copy to your ASA Program Manager. This is a critical step, as we must ensure you are complying with immigration requirements.

Budgeting for Study Abroad

The EURO (€) became the official currency of Italy on January 1, 1999. Bills come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500. Coins come in denominations of €2, €1, 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents, 2 cents and 1 cent.

Exchange rates fluctuate, so check <http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi> for today's exchange rate.

How much money should I bring?

US\$250-300 per week of your stay

Please note that these are general guidelines based on what past students have reported spending. Some students spend less and others more. The above figures do not allow for traveling every weekend, eating out a lot, or shopping every day.

** = Accounted for in weekly money recommendations above.*

What expenses should I budget for?

Please note: Housing, medical insurance, and all other ASA services are not included during the break between semesters or terms.

1. **Permit of Stay** €120 (Semester students ONLY) You will need €16 Euros + €104 Euros cash or debit/credit card. For the cash portion, you must have the EXACT amount--you can draw this out of an ATM when you arrive.
2. **Meals *** Each apartment has a fully equipped kitchen.
3. **Books and materials for your classes** Budget US\$500 per semester; US\$250 per summer session. Do NOT purchase any books or materials until you get to La Spezia.
4. **Course Fees** Course Fees are not included in tuition and must be paid by the student to Florence University of the Arts in cash euros, after arrival. Course Fees cover the cost of mandatory academic field trips (called Field Learning Activities) and consumable course materials. Classes in the following subject areas usually have Course Fees: Studio Art, Food/Wine, Photography, Fashion, Music, Hospitality, Art History, Science, Mathematics, Design, and some Liberal Arts. The cost is usually €70-140 per course, but may be higher for certain classes. You received a list of Course Fees when you received your Class Schedule from ASA. A list of Course Fees can also be found on the ASA website. Course Fees are not refundable – for example, even if you miss a Field Learning Activity. In addition, students enrolled in culinary programs must purchase or rent a professional “uniform kit” at their own expense.
5. **Local transportation** Budget \$250 per semester; US\$100 per summer session. Local transportation includes getting around town during your free time, getting to and from where your group is meeting to depart for an excursion or academic field trip, and getting home afterwards. This may include paying for bus and taxi fares. Most students are able to walk to/from class and some take the bus.
6. **Cell phone** Budget US\$400 per semester; US\$75 per summer session.
7. **Spending money / Personal expenses** Entertainment, shopping, souvenirs, dining out, travel, haircuts, toothpaste, etc. This is accounted for in our weekly money recommendation.
8. **Meals on excursions** (Accounted for in weekly recommendation above)
9. **Transportation back to the airport at the end of the program** Budget US\$50
10. **Have at least \$1,000 in savings for emergencies**

Arrival

What should I do when I get off the plane at Pisa airport?

01 Passport Control/Immigration

After you de-plane, you will go through Passport Control (also called Immigration) and Customs.

02 Baggage Claim

After Passport Control and Customs, follow signs to baggage claim. Delayed baggage must be reported to your airline's lost luggage counter before exiting the baggage claim area.

After claiming your bags, exit into the airport lobby and look for a FUA sign or a sign with your name on it.

Staff cannot meet you at Baggage Claim.

03 Meet FUA Staff

Once you've found a FUA staff member, they will take you to your program housing.

If my flight is delayed, will you still pick me up at the airport?

If you will not be arriving as scheduled, it is YOUR responsibility to notify the emergency contact person indicated on your Last-Minute Checklist.

HELPFUL TIPS

Address for delivery of delayed luggage:

Your Full Name
c/o FUA
Via Sant'Agostino, 46
19121 La Spezia SP
ITALY

Do NOT have your lost luggage delivered to your apartment!

Academics

Important Contacts at FUA:

Academic Office: academics.advisor@fua.it

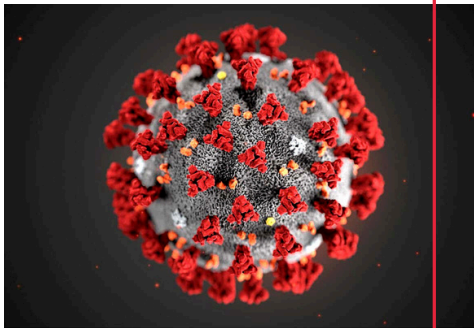
Registrar: admissions@fua.it

Student Life Department: sld-studentservices@fua.it

Student Housing: sld-housing@fua.it

HELPFUL TIPS

[FUA Website](#)



COVID-19

Your host university may have COVID-19 protocols you must follow, such as sanitizing your desk after class, not congregating indoors, wearing a mask, sanitizing hands, and others.



Receiving Packages at FUA

You may be charged an expensive customs fee to receive a package, so we DO NOT recommend sending packages unless truly necessary! The FUA front desk will NOT pay the customs for you, but will arrange a new drop off at a later date. They will send you an e-mail with details. You are responsible for getting the money to the front desk before the new delivery date, otherwise your package will not be accepted. Use the address on the previous page for packages sent to FUA. Do NOT send to your apartment!



Academic Honesty Policy

During orientation, students are required to sign an agreement regarding academic honesty and rules of behavior.

A detailed Calendar of Events, including orientation and excursion dates & locations, will be emailed to you about 2 weeks before your program starts. Calendar is subject to change.

All Orientation Meetings are mandatory.

Click [here](#) to view the general Academic Calendar for your upcoming program (which includes dates of any breaks).

FUA Academic Policies

Academics

FUA's most up-to-date academic policies can be found at this link: <https://fua.it/key-info/academics.html>.

Add/Drop Procedure & Final Registration

You can make ONLY ONE add/drop to your class schedule after arrival. If you wish to swap one class for another, the change must be made simultaneously. Once your add/drop request is processed, it cannot be changed or undone. Please listen carefully during the FUA Orientation (after arrival) for information how to request an add/drop. FUA's add/drop procedures must be followed exactly, for no exceptions are made. *A level change in an Italian language course does NOT count as your one add/drop.*

Course Fees (for mandatory Field Learning Activities & Materials)

Certain courses require students to pay Course Fees to cover the costs of mandatory academic field trips (called Field Learning Activities), consumable materials, supplies, and specialized equipment. In addition, students enrolled in culinary programs must purchase or rent a professional "uniform kit" in order to participate in the program. THESE COSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED WITH TUITION. ASA gives students a list of Course Fees along with their class schedule, well in advance of departure. You can find a list of Course Fees on ASA's [website](#).

Attendance Policy & Absences

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are the foundation of any academic institution. This is reflected in FUA's attendance policy. Class attendance is mandatory and counts towards the final grade.

The number of allowed absences is based on the number of class meetings. One absence equals 3 missed in-class hours. STUDENTS ARE ONLY ALLOWED ONE "FREE" ABSENCE PER COURSE. Additional absences - for any reason - will affect your grade:

- 2nd absence - Attendance and participation portion of your grade will be impacted
- 3rd absence - Instructor may lower the final grade by one letter grade
- 4th absence - Constitutes automatic failure of the course
- Missed Field Learning Activity - Counts as 2 absences!

THERE ARE NO EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR ILLNESS OR OTHER REASONS YOU MAY BELIEVE TO BE VALID, EVEN IF THE REASONS MAY BE CONSIDERED VALID AT YOUR HOME INSTITUTION. You are subject to FUA's absence policies, not the absence policy of your home institution. Absences are only excusable if you are hospitalized. We strongly recommend you save your 1 "free" absence in case you are actually ill. Students who arrive late or depart early from class may be counted as an absence. During orientation in La Spezia, FUA and ASA will remind students of the attendance policy.

You must check with your home institution to ensure you understand:

- The minimum grade you need to earn to receive transfer credit. Typically you need to earn a C or C+, but this can vary by institution. Check with your home institution to ensure you understand their requirements!
- Will your grades impact your GPA? Every institution handles this differently! Some institutions transfer in study abroad grades and it impacts your GPA. Some transfer in the grades and it doesn't impact your GPA. Others transfer in study abroad grades as pass/fail. Be sure you understand how your institution handles this.

You must check with your host institution or ASA Site Director upon arrival to ensure you understand:

- The deadline to change or drop classes. Classes dropped after your host institution's add/drop deadline will appear on your final transcript with a failing grade.
- What is your host institution's attendance policy? Absences from class will affect your grade and can result in a failing grade. Many institutions only allow a couple of absences a semester and only for valid reasons such as medical. Travel or family/friend visit is NOT ever an excused absence.

Academics

Grading System and Guide

All PALAZZI member institutions subscribe to the following grading scale.

It is NOT permitted to audit a course or take it pass, fail or incomplete.

A 93-100%	A- 90-92%	B+ 87-89%	B 83-86%	B- 80-82%
C+ 77-79%	C 73-76%	C- 70-72%	D 60-69%	F 0-59%

W: Official Withdrawal

This grade is assigned to semester students who withdraw from a course before the withdrawal deadline (which is usually during the 8th or 9th week of the semester). The deadline for summer students to withdraw from a course and receive a W on the transcript depends on the length of your session – check with the FUA Registrar to be sure. Students are eligible for withdrawal only if the number of absences does not exceed the limit for automatic failure. Any withdrawal after classes have begun must be officially registered by filling out the required forms at the FUA Registrar's office. Withdrawal entails forfeiture of course credits as well as tuition and fees. Students who drop courses without going through FUA's withdrawal procedure will receive a failing grade ("F") on their records.

WF: Failure to Withdrawal

This grade is assigned to semester students who withdraw from a course after the withdrawal deadline (which is usually during the 8th or 9th week of the semester). The withdrawal deadline for summer students depends on the length of your session – check with the FUA Registrar to be sure. A grade of "Incomplete" may be issued for extenuating non-academic circumstances (serious illness, hospitalization, death of parent or sibling) arising after the withdrawal deadline has passed. Requests for Incomplete must be made in writing directly to FUA and include documentation. Decisions are made by the FUA Senate.

Exam Policies

All students must take all quizzes, midterm exams and final exams at the established exam time and date indicated in the course syllabus. Permission is given to reschedule exams ONLY ON VERY RARE OCCASIONS AND ONLY ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. Example of emergencies that may allow for rescheduled exams: 1) Student is hospitalized; 2) Student has a serious physical or mental health issue; 3) Student has an emergency involving an immediate family member (parent or sibling). Examples of situations that are never approved: 1) Student wants to attend a wedding, graduation, family reunion, etc.; 2) Student has made personal travel plans; 3) Student has family or friends visiting; 4) Student accidentally booked their flight to leave a day early; 5) Student needs to get home to start an internship, job, or classes. There is no guarantee that a request to reschedule an exam will be approved. Each case must be reviewed by the FUA Senate. Requests must be made in writing directly to FUA and include documentation. Requests must be filed prior to the date of the scheduled exam. If a student is approved to reschedule an exam, the student will not under any circumstance be able to reschedule a second time. Additional fee will apply to rescheduled exams!

Students with Disabilities

PALAZZI member institutions are committed to providing all students with a comfortable, productive and non-discriminative academic environment. Assistance is offered to students who have demonstrable and/or documented learning disabilities. Students should note that they might not have the same level of services and facilities available to them as their home institution.

PALAZZI member institutions offer separate exam rooms, extra time for exams, and the use of one's laptop computer for written exams. All other accommodations must be negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of the student's arrival in Italy and may require additional fees. Students needing accommodation must notify the FUA registrar prior to the start of the semester and provide documentation. Notification or documentation of a learning or physical disability may not be submitted once the term has started. Every effort will be made to accommodate students with physical disabilities.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Institutional policy prohibits discrimination against current or prospective students and employees on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other legally protected characteristic.

Student Life Department

The FUA Student Life Department was created to offer all students of the affiliated schools a safe, educational and entertaining environment in which they can discover the city of La Spezia, Italian culture and language, and foster relationships with fellow students and become acquainted with the local community. The mission of Student Services is to offer a unique, culturally relevant and personally enriching program of activities and opportunities to participating students.

The FUA Student Life Department organizes FREE activities for FUA students, such as:

- Sports Night (Soccer, volleyball, kayaking)
- City Walks (Guided walks through local neighborhoods)
- Mind & Body (fitness opportunities – guided runs/power walks through new neighborhoods and more!)
- Connecting Cultures (semester long activities on cultural awareness)
- Chat Pal (You meet with an Italian person to practice your Italian; and they practice their English.)
- Cineforum (Movie night)
- Community Outreach (volunteer opportunities)

The FUA Student Life Department also organizes Educational Field Trips – reasonably priced, all-inclusive day trips for which you can buy tickets. Lists of upcoming trips can be found at: <https://www.studentlifeflorence.it/>

Please do not book any non-refundable trips until you arrive and confirm your class schedule, as well as find out the dates of the trips ASA is including for you!

COVID-19 In Country

You are responsible for complying with all COVID-19 protocols and recommendations throughout your journey. COVID-19 protocols will vary based on the city where you are studying. Once you arrive, our Site Director(s) will educate you on the COVID-19 protocols you need to follow on site. PROTOCOLS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE! Local officials make changes to protocols based on case data, which may become stricter or more relaxed at any time.

Your housing and host institution may have their own COVID-19 protocols you must follow as well. Once again, these are subject to change without notice.

Housing

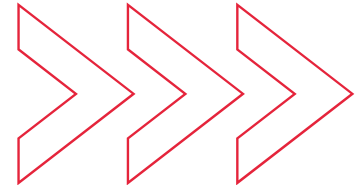
ASA will email you your housing assignment approximately 2 weeks before your program start date.

You will live in a fully furnished shared apartment with anywhere from 2 to 10 occupants. Bedrooms are usually double occupancy; a small number are triple or quadruple occupancy. You are responsible for your own meals and laundry. The apartments are typically located a 20-30 minute walk from class.

- Bedding and towels are provided.
- All apartments are NON-SMOKING.
- We cannot guarantee one standard of housing. Every apartment is different in size, structure, number of rooms, size of rooms, room composition, etc. Bedrooms may be shared OR individual. In Italy, it is very common for apartments NOT to have separate living room and dining room. In many Italian homes, the living room and dining room are one combined room. Internet is provided.
- All students must abide by the ASA and FUA Code of Conduct that they signed prior to departure. Violating the Code of Conduct may lead to expulsion from your housing and/or from the ASA program. Any student removed from housing will be responsible for finding his/her own housing and will not receive a refund.
- Each shared apartment will be considered a "pod" or "family unit." The building you live in may have guidelines that you must follow concerning conduct, socializing, social distancing, and mask wearing. Parties and gatherings are strictly prohibited. Guests will not be permitted inside your apartment/flat. The building you live in may also place restrictions on guests, even in common areas of the building. Housing protocols may be adjusted to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the local community.

Everyday Life

Drug & Alcohol Policy



Drug use and alcohol abuse AT ANY TIME, ANYWHERE WHILE THE PROGRAM IS IN SESSION is strictly prohibited and may lead to you being removed from your housing and/or the program. Being drunk is considered abuse of alcohol.

Guests

GUESTS OF ANY KIND ARE NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, PER ITALIAN LAW! BY LAW, ONLY PEOPLE REGISTERED AS LIVING IN A RESIDENCE MAY STAY THERE. SUBLETTING IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE. If overnight guests are caught in your apartment, you could also be fined or be prosecuted under Italian law. Your neighbors will call the police if there is too much traffic in and out of your apartment. Repeat violators will be removed from ASA housing with no refund. Per COVID-19 restrictions, you may not have guests in your apartment during the day either. Roommates and housemates are considered a "family unit" and only the family unit is allowed in the apartment.

► NEVER invite casual acquaintances or new friends who you have just met to your apartment!

Conduct

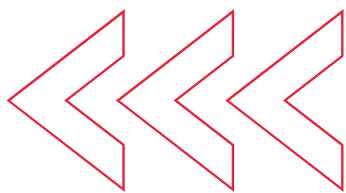
Living in Italy means that you are subject to Italian laws and standards of living! These laws are quite different from what you are accustomed to in the U.S.

In addition, it is important to appreciate that your apartment building houses La Spezia residents and families who permanently live and work in La Spezia. You will be living as GUESTS among these families. Be friendly if you encounter them in your building! It can only benefit you to create goodwill with your neighbors!

Students must remember that they are NOT living in a dormitory or residence hall or on a U.S. campus. You are living IN THE CITY, among permanent residents. You must conduct yourself as a responsible adult and observe certain housing policies and safety procedures, such as:

- Not accommodating overnight guests.
- Keeping noise to a minimum.
- Conserving utility usage. (Utilities in Europe are much more expensive.)
- Keep your apartment door locked AT ALL TIMES, even while you are at home.
- Make sure the front door to your building locks behind you EACH time you enter. Don't let the door swing shut – always TURN AROUND and make sure it locks.
- Never hold the door for someone unless you are SURE they live in your building. This is a common way for thieves to get in a building and rob people. Do not worry that you are being rude! Your neighbors will appreciate that you are being careful!

Flexibility and consideration for your housemates and neighbors are essential to a successful and rewarding experience.



Everyday Life

Maintenance

Much of Italy's sewage system has been around since the Renaissance, so be gentle with the plumbing! The toilet and drains are not a garbage disposal – do NOT flush things like food, hair, sanitary items, cotton balls, dental floss, or the like. Only liquids should go down drains. You will be charged for plumbing fees due to misuse.

Students are responsible for daily maintenance, including cleaning the apartment, taking out the garbage DAILY (this is standard practice in Europe), washing your sheets and towels, reporting maintenance issues (e.g. clogged drain) to your ASA Site Director, changing light bulbs, and other such tasks.

You must keep your living area clean and organized at all times. Do not leave trash lying around the apartment or in the stairwells, as this could interfere with maintenance.

You will be charged for any damages, as well as utility overages, when you leave your apartment.

During your orientation, your ASA Site Director will talk about how to conserve utility usage so you don't have overages. In addition, a section on Conserving Utility Usage can be found below.

National Quiet Hour Laws & Noise Advisories

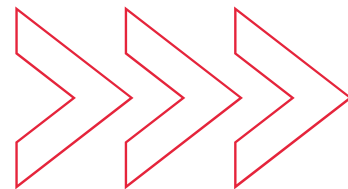
In Italy, there are national "quiet hour" laws that must be observed after 11 pm every night until 9 am. Excessive noise made between 11pm and 9am could result in arrest and a misdemeanor charge.

Italian laws concerning cases of disturbing the peace are very strict. If you make excess noise and the police are summoned, heavy fines will be levied. Repeated problems of this nature can lead to removal from ASA housing and/or the ASA program.

Loud music, loud talking and shouting are not permitted in ASA housing. You will not have a curfew, but please be considerate of your roommates and especially of other people in your building by being EXTRA quiet when returning home late at night. Be sure to take off your shoes as soon as you enter your apartment (even during the day), because shoes, and especially shoes with heels, will produce loud noise in your downstairs neighbor's apartment.

Parties are NOT permitted. Your neighbors will not hesitate to call the police at the slightest disturbance after hours!

Everyday Life



Keys

You will receive ONE set of keys. It is forbidden to make copies of these keys or lend them to anyone. Be careful not to lose them! If you lose your keys, you will be responsible for the cost of changing the locks for your apartment AND the building front door, and issuing brand new keys for everyone.

Move-Out

When you vacate your apartment at the end of the semester, all personal items, including trash, toiletries, food, etc. must be removed from the apartment. Everything that was present in the apartment at check-in must be present and in good condition. You must leave the apartment clean, remove all food and personal items, return all furniture to its original position, wash your dishes, take out the garbage, turn off the gas and all appliances and lights, close all windows and wash all linens.

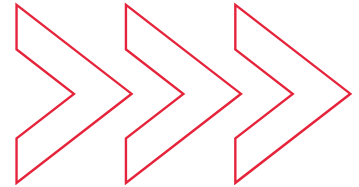
Conserving Utility Usage

Utilities such as water, electricity, and gas (heat) are much more expensive in Europe than they are in the U.S. In Italy, the heat may only turn on at certain times of the day, by Italian law.

Here are some tips to conserve energy:

- Avoid taking more than one or long showers – also, your roommates might have ice-cold showers!
- Washing machines are MUCH smaller than you are used to, and the cycle takes nearly an hour, so don't be afraid to re-wear your clothes! Re-wearing clothes will reduce the amount of laundry you do (and water and electricity you use). Use 50-60° water for whites and 30° for dark colors. If you don't have enough for a full load, consider hand washing. Always wash delicate items by hand (i.e. sweaters, undergarments), as the washing machines can be hard on delicates. **YOU WILL NOT HAVE A CLOTHES DRYER** – this is not standard in Italian homes. You will need to hang dry your clothes (try putting them near the heater). Your apartment will have a clothesline or drying rack for clothes. Or, you can take your wet clothes to a Laundromat – they have dryers there.
- La Spezia is an ancient city, so the buildings are very old. Having the washing machine, hair dryer, and all the lights on will blow the fuses. If you **TURN OFF / UNPLUG** all appliances and devices when not in use, you will not only save utilities but you'll also avoid blowing the fuses. If you do blow the fuses, it's easy to fix, but you need to know where the circuit breakers are. You can avoid this problem by only using what you need. Turn off the lights when leaving a room to save electricity. If you go away for the weekend, be sure not to leave any lights on!
- Stoves and ovens are generally gas operated. You may have a switch or valve to turn on the gas and then have to light the burners on the stove with a match or a sparker, which you can buy at the supermarket. You may also have a water heater in the kitchen that you must turn on in order to have hot water. This is a common misunderstanding when students first move in – if you don't have hot water, it's probably because you have to turn on the water heater. It is usually located in the kitchen. Finally, turn off the gas if everyone will be out of town.

Everyday Life



Conserving Utility Usage, continued...

- When it turns cold, DO NOT run the heat all night. Warm up the apartment before bed and then turn it down. The warmth will last through the night. As a general rule, homes in Europe are not heated as well as homes here – and since utilities are cheaper here, we are more likely to crank up the heat, whereas a European would instead put on a sweater. You may need to reverse your thinking about that. For students abroad during colder months, bring warm pajamas and socks and clothes you can layer when you're at home.
- Your apartment will NOT be air conditioned. The best way to keep your apartment cool in the summer is to keep it dark. Close the outside shutters during the hottest part of the day, and your apartment will feel air-conditioned. You'll also be provided with a fan.

Local Transportation Taxi

IN LA SPEZIA TAXIS CANNOT BE HAILED FROM THE STREET

To get a taxi, your options are:

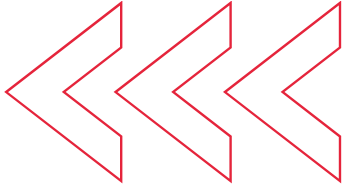
- 1) Walk to one of the taxi stands in the main squares OR train station**
- 2) Call Radio Taxi La Spezia ahead at +39 0187523523 for a taxi, and they will pick you up.

Uber is NOT available in La Spezia.

**Very late at night or very early in the morning, do not count on there being taxis at one of the taxi stands. Call for a taxi if it's very late or very early – otherwise you could end up roaming the streets alone at night or being late for your flight, if you are going to the airport. If you need a ride to the airport, call a day ahead to schedule your taxi, and they will come to your apartment to pick you up.

Taxis sometimes accept cash only! It is normal for them to charge a supplement (1-2 euro, usually) for each piece of luggage and for journeys at night. There are fixed rates to certain locations.

Visit [here](#) for Radio Taxi fares.



Everyday Life

Local Transportation

Bus

Public bus transportation in La Spezia is provided by A.T.C., a company that has been operating in the province for over 30 years. The 'urbano' bus service covers the municipality of La Spezia, while the 'extra urbano' reaches the rest of the province, as well as cities such as Carrara and Aulla, and the province of Reggio Emilia.

For local travel, tickets can be purchased at ticket offices, authorized retailers (look for a blue "T" sign), via SMS, or through apps like DropTicket. Single tickets and daily passes are available. For longer trips to other cities or specialized tours to Cinque Terre, you will need to book with a different provider.

Buy your tickets BEFORE you board the bus, as the bus driver does NOT check tickets and let's everyone on without asking for a ticket. Fines are very expensive if you are caught riding the bus without your ticket, or without having stamped it.

Bus travel outside La Spezia: Companies like FlixBus, Itabus, and Marino Autolinee offer services to and from other Italian cities, such as Rome, Milan, and Florence. Book tickets online through the companies' websites or apps, and consider booking in advance for potential savings.

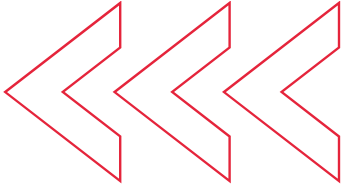
Train

Trains are the most practical way to move between La Spezia and nearby, regional and national destinations.

La Spezia's central train station, La Spezia Centrale, has regional and national services to cities like Florence and Pisa. It's also the primary hub for the Cinque Terre Express train, which connects the five villages with frequent service and high-speed options available for longer-distance travel. Station amenities include ticket counters, information desks, WiFi, and luggage lockers.

Individual train tickets and schedules can be purchased at the train station and from all major travel agents (with no extra charge). You can buy tickets for national or international routes in advance through apps and websites like those for Italo, Trenitalia, TheTrainline, or Omio.

► Single tickets must be validated at the green stamp machines on the platform before boarding. IF YOU FORGET TO DO SO, THE CONDUCTOR WILL MAKE YOU PAY A FINE. Tickets purchased online and Cinque Terre Cards do not need to be validated.



Everyday Life

Grocery Shopping

In Italy, it's common to buy vegetables, fruits, cheese, bread and fish at local food markets. Be aware that some stands might not accept credit card payments so be sure to bring cash with you. The products at the market are usually very fresh and cheap! Hours may vary.

Markets

- La Spezia Food Market, Piazza Cavour, 1 (8:30am-7:30pm Mon-Fri; 8:30am-2pm and 4pm-7:30pm Sat.; closed Sundays)
- Mercato Ortofrutticolo e Ittico, Piazza Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour (7:30am-1:30pm Mon-Sat., closed Sundays)

Supermarkets

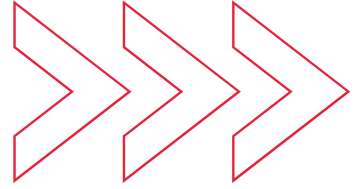
- Esselunga, Corso Nazionale, 578 (7:30am-9:00pm every day except Sunday 8am-8pm and public holidays)
- Coop, Viale Giovanni Amendola, 220 (8am-8:30pm every day except Saturday/Sundays 8:30am-8pm and holidays)
- Carrefour Express, Via di Monale, 69 (daily 7:30am-11:45pm)
- Lidl, Via Valdellora, 1 (daily 8-9:30 except Sunday 8:00-9pm)
- Superstore, Corso Nazionale, 578 (7:30am-9pm except Sundays 9am-8pm)

Movies

Foreign films are usually dubbed in Italian. However, some cinemas give you the opportunity to view films in their original language (such as English) – these will be labeled “VO” which means Original Version. Going to an Italian movie could prove to be an interesting cultural experience as well as a great way to practice Italian. Sometimes you can get discounted movie tickets by showing your student card.

- Cinema Il Nuovo: Via Cristoforo Colombo 99, La Spezia
- Cinema Moderno Multisala: Via del Carmine 35, Sarzana (approx. 12 miles away).
- Cinema Astoria: Via Gerini 40, Lerici (approx. 14 miles away).

Everyday Life



Religious Services

Although Italy is predominantly a Catholic country, religious services of various denominations may be found in the city center.

Catholic

- Cattedrale di Cristo R, Piazzale Papa Giovanni XXIII
- Pieve di San Venerio, Via della Pieve, 114
- Chiesa Abbaziale di Santa Maria Assunta, Via della Canonica, 4

Protestant

- Chiesa Evangelistica Battist, Via Milano, 40

Methodist

- Chiesa Evangelista Metodista, Via Manfredo da Passano, 29

Mormon

- Church of Latter-Day Saints, Via Emanuele Gianturco, 31

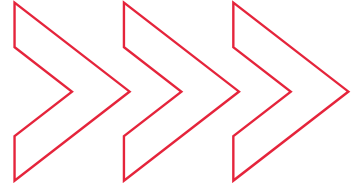
Jewish

- Piccola Opera Regina Apostolorum, Via Ventisette Marzo, 44,
- Synagogue La Spezia, Via XX Settembre 165V

Islamic

- Moschea, Via Paolo Mantegazza, 11
- Centro Culturale Islamico Arrahman, Via Paolo Mantegazza 11

Everyday Life



Luggage Storage

If you plan to travel before or after the program and need to store your luggage, here are some options:

Bag Safe

Via Sant'Agostino, 50

Starting from €2.99

Open 24/7

Tel: +39 348 480 1504

Stow and Go

Via XX Settembre, 209, 150 meters from La Spezia central station

Starting €1/hour

Open 24/7

Tel: +39 347 324 5031

Bounce Luggage

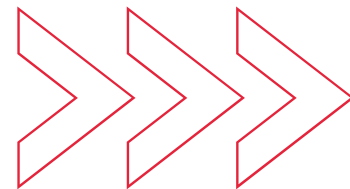
Via Fiume, 80--have multiple locations through site

Starting €3.50/day

Open 24/7

Tel: +39 06 9480 1323

Everyday Life



Weather

La Spezia has a mild Mediterranean climate, typical of the Ligurian coast.

FALL – Be prepared for warm, breezy summer-like weather when you arrive for the Fall semester – temperatures can still feel quite hot through late September. As the season progresses, the weather gradually cools. By November, you'll notice a distinct drop in temperature and more frequent rain showers as winter approaches. Light layers are ideal early in the season, but you'll want a jacket and waterproof shoes by late fall.

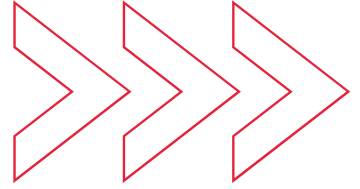
SPRING – Spring is generally mild and pleasant, with temperatures gradually warming from the cooler winter months. You will need to pack warm winter clothing that you can layer, along with a water-resistant jacket and shoes or boots. Expect some wet and windy days until mid-March, when it begins to warm up. March can still feel a bit brisk and damp, but by April and May, the days become sunnier and comfortably warm.

Keep in mind that European homes are often not as well-heated as American homes. Pack warm pajamas, socks, and plenty of layers to stay comfortable indoors. Many students report that, even though the winter temperatures are mild, it can feel colder due to limited heating. Layering your clothes is the best way to stay warm and adaptable.

SUMMER – Summer is typically hot, sunny, and dry (highs in the 80s to 90s °F), with long days and plenty of sunshine. Coastal breezes help keep the heat comfortable, especially near the water, but inland areas can feel quite warm during midday.

Months	Temperature
Jan - March	50-60° F
April - May	60-70° F
June - Sept	75-88° F
Oct - Dec	50-65° F

Everyday Life: Culture



Aperitivo

The custom of having an aperitivo before dinner is common in Italy. The word “aperitivo” derives from the Latin verb “aperire” which means “to open,” and that is just what an aperitivo is: an opener to the meal. While elsewhere in the world aperitivo usually refers to a pre-dinner drink or cocktail, in Italy it also implies tasty snacks put out for customers to enjoy (included in the price of the drink). The food varies from place to place and can range from olives and chips to elaborate buffets with hot pasta dishes, cheese, and ham. Standard aperitivo starts at 7:00 p.m. and ends around 9:00 p.m. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, and prices range from 10 to 15 euro.

How to Dress

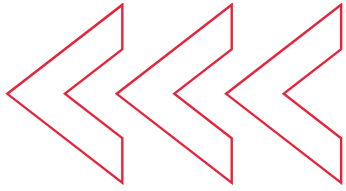
Neatness is an Italian virtue. You should expect to dress more formally in Italy and you must be aware that you are not on a U.S. college campus. Italians tend to wear more dark/neutral colors (black, gray, beige, brown). If you bring clothes in these colors, you will not only blend in better, but you'll save space in your suitcase because you can mix and match using fewer pieces.

Example: You may walk into a local bar wearing flip-flops and a college T-shirt and ask for a can of coca-cola at 10:00 a.m. Immediately, you will notice that you are the only one in the bar with open-toed shoes, a short sleeved shirt, no jacket and drinking a Coke. The rest of the patrons of the bar will be “dressed up” wearing jackets, pants, closed-toe shoes or boots and ordering a coffee.

While people may, of course, dress as they prefer around La Spezia, keep in mind that it is easy to stick out as a foreigner because of your clothing. Italians simply tend to have a more formal way of dressing than is typical of American college students. Italians do not go out in public in sweats, stretch pants, yoga pants, or flip flops, unless they are on their way to the gym. Flip flops are only worn at the beach. Pajamas are never to be worn outside your apartment.

Many churches (the Vatican included) do not allow people to enter unless their legs and shoulders are covered, even in summer months, so keep this in mind while traveling or while on a program field trip/excursion.

Leave your high heels at home! Streets in Italy are notoriously uneven from the cobblestone. If you walk on cobblestone in any sort of heel (even a low heel) you can sprain your ankle. Students HAVE sprained their ankles this way and spent the rest of the semester on crutches. Finally, it is difficult to roll your suitcases on the cobblestone – you may have to carry them, so try not to pack too heavy. Watch out for broken suitcase wheels from the cobblestone. Happens all the time...some students have had to buy new luggage.



Everyday Life: Culture

Cash Is King

You will find that some establishments (restaurants and shops) only accept cash. Those that accept credit/debit cards may ask you if you have cash or discourage you from paying with your card. You'll need to carry more cash than you are used to carrying at home.

Don't Ask To Split The Bill

Do not ask your waiter to split up a bill for you, and NEVER ask them to charge the bill to more than one credit/debit card. This is generally an "American thing" and is not acceptable to request pretty much anywhere in Europe. You will need to simply calculate the amount owed by each person and then each person puts in some cash.

Italian Manners

When you enter a store, restaurant, coffee bar, or if you encounter the residents in your building, it is polite to greet them. In the morning, you would say, "buon giorno," and after lunch, "buona sera." Upon leaving, you would say "arrivederLa," or "arrivederci" for the people with whom you are more familiar. When you are introduced to someone, say "piacere" ("it's a pleasure") or "molto lieto" ("pleased to meet you").

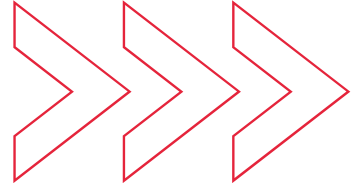
Italians do not consider a door to be "closed" unless it is locked—as in restroom doors.

Standing In Line

Throughout Italy, most people seem reluctant to stand in line. They often crowd around bank teller windows, ticket booths, food stands and cashiers with little respect for the fact that somebody else arrived there first. This can be a really frustrating experience for most Americans, who are used to an orderly line.

Just understand that this is a cultural difference, and not a display of mean spirited behavior. It is something that takes time to get used to. Patience is a virtue, because there will be times someone who got there after you gets served first! Take a deep breath and remember that this isn't necessarily rude – it's a different "system" to which you have not adapted yet. One tactic is to try to remember who got there before you and after you, stand your ground (don't let people push in front of you), and when it's your turn, step right up! Don't be afraid to be assertive. If you expect the cashier to keep track of who is next and then call you when it's your turn, you'll be waiting all day. The cashier leaves it up to the people to ascertain who is next. Again, don't be afraid to be assertive!

Everyday Life: Culture



Shopping

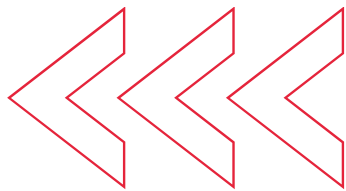
Upon entering a shop, one asks permission, “permesso?” Never touch items in a market or shop unless you ask “posso” (“may I?”) A rule of thumb is: Look at the other shoppers, and if you don’t see them touching the merchandise, do the same.

If you are in a food market and you are told it’s ok to touch things, always grab a sheet of plastic or a bag to pick up the produce – never touch produce with your bare hands in Italy, as this is considered extremely rude!

At some of the larger stores and chain stores (like H&M) it is perfectly ok to browse, touch things, and carry items to the dressing room, as you are used to doing at home. But at smaller stores and markets, you should always assume you are not permitted to touch things. What is the reasoning behind this? It not only helps prevent shoplifting, but there is a cultural difference behind this as well. People who work in markets or shops in Italy (as well as many other countries in Europe) feel it is their job to assist you in selecting something. To take that job away from them would be eliminating their purpose! In a food market, this is especially true because it is the vendor’s job to select the best, ripest produce for you.

Also keep in mind that in Italy, shops are very small. The window displays may already give an accurate picture of the merchandise available, and the prices are often listed in the window display, too. This is to prevent too much foot traffic in such a small space. It is general practice to enter these small shops only if you are looking to buy, if you see something in the window that sparks your interest and is within your price range. Leisurely browsing in tiny shops may be discouraged the shopkeeper. Window shopping, on the other hand, is always acceptable and the displays are generally quite beautiful (Italians are very good at optimizing the little space they have). You will find many people pausing in front of store windows to gaze.

While there are supermarkets, most of them are much smaller than those in the US. You will not find a “wholesale” (Costco) type of store. Most shops specialize in certain types of products (i.e., a key store, a jewelry store, a stationery store, a hardware store, a vegetable market, a fruit market, a butcher, etc). Sometimes, this makes it more challenging to find a specific product, but it can also be fun to see all the different kinds of shops that are around!



Everyday Life: Culture

Coffee

While in Italy coffee is certainly an important part of the culture, it differs greatly from the American “stay all day with your laptop” coffeehouse culture. Places considered “cafes” in the US are typically called “bars” in Italian. Bars offer both coffee and alcoholic beverages, and are usually frequented during the day. There is a reason that Italians drink espresso rather than the large cups of coffee that Americans tend to prefer: speed. A coffee break is a brief event, in and out of the caffè in 5-10 minutes, mostly standing up at the bar counter. In most bars, there are actually different prices for those who drink their espresso standing up and those who prefer table service. There is generally a price list on the wall which indicates both prices. Depending on the location of the bar, this price difference can be quite significant. Bars in the center of La Spezia (especially those with tables outside in the main squares) tend to charge you not just for the coffee, but for the view as well. A 1 euro coffee can easily become a €6/7 coffee, so be aware. Ordering a “caffè” automatically means “espresso”. If you prefer American style coffee, you need to specify: “caffè Americano” or “caffè lungo”.

Siesta

Many businesses close for a few hours in the afternoon for the Italian version of “siesta”. They typically close around 1 pm and re-open between 3:30-4 pm. This includes pharmacies (there are always pharmacies open 24 hours a day), clothing stores, etc. The farther you are from the center of town, and especially when you travel to smaller cities in Italy, the more you will need to take these closures into consideration.

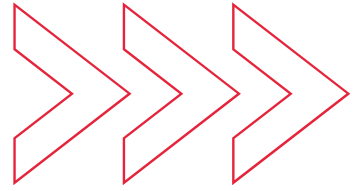
Businesses tend to stay open until 7 or 8 in the evening.

Eating/Dining Out

Italians eat well, and they enjoy the social as well as the gastronomic aspects of a meal. In a good restaurant you are expected to spend enough time and money to eat at least two courses. The first course, the “primo,” can be an “antipasto,” or pasta; the second course, the “secondo,” is meat, vegetables, or fish.

You may find that restaurant service seems less attentive – the waiter will probably not come back multiple times to ask, “How is everything.” This is because the expectation is that you are there to enjoy the food and company and do not want to be interrupted constantly.

Everyday Life: Culture



Vegetarian & Gluten Free

It is easy to eat vegetarian and gluten free meals in Italy. Most pasta dishes are non-meat; vegetables are plentiful, varied, and well cooked. It is perfectly acceptable to order a couple of vegetables for a second plate ("secondo").

Italy is considered one of the most gluten-free friendly countries in the world. Students with a gluten-free diet will have no problem finding gluten-free products in markets and supermarkets, as well as gluten-free items on restaurant menus.

Paying The Restaurant Bill

You usually have to ask for the bill ("conto") in a restaurant, as opposed to waiting for them to bring you the bill. Again, this is because the cultural expectation is that you have come to the restaurant to enjoy yourself and do not want to be rushed.

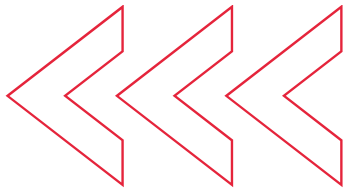
Also, the charges on a restaurant bill can confuse non-Italians. You will see a charge for "servizio" or "coperto." This is a standard charge per person and covers the tip/service and bread (usually runs between €1-€2 pp). This means that you need to leave only a minimal tip - €0.50 per person is fine.

In a coffee bar, the bill works differently. Usually you have to pay first, then take the receipt "scontrino" to the bar and order your "caffè" or other beverage. When you pay they will ask you, "a tavola?" or "al bar?" which is asking you if you want to eat/drink at a table, or standing at the bar. In most coffee bars, they will charge a bit more if you want to take your food/drinks to a table (as opposed to eating/drinking standing at the bar).

Finally, in a restaurant the waiter will usually ask you: "Frizzante o naturale" which means: Do you want sparkling water (acqua frizzante) or flat/tap water (acqua naturale). There is always a charge for sparkling water. Once in a while, they may charge you for tap water as well.

Tipping

Once again, in Italian restaurants, you will be charged a "coperto" or "servizio", which is a standard charge per person which usually runs between €1-€2 pp. This will be automatically included on your bill and covers the tip/service, as well as bread. If you wish to leave more of a tip, pocket change is completely acceptable. It is NOT necessary to tip 20% of the bill. A little extra is of course appreciated, but large tips are not expected nor required. Likewise, it is not necessary to tip bartenders. You will be wasting your money if you give them a tip for every drink. Tipping taxi drivers is also not necessary, though a little extra on top of the fare is generally acceptable and appreciated, especially if they have helped you with your luggage.



Everyday Life: Culture

Drinking Alcohol

Italians have certain expectations about drinking that are not in line with the drinking habits of many American college students. Disregarding these standards can lead to uncomfortable or dangerous moments.

Italians seldom drink alcohol other than with meals and do not binge drink – this is considered unseemly and in poor taste. “Going out drinking” is not an Italian activity. It is true that wine is considered an integral part of the cuisine, but the expectation is that you drink a glass or two with a meal. Italian law does not tolerate public drunkenness either. Not only will you give a “brutta figura” (a bad impression), you can be arrested and incarcerated for public intoxication. Culturally speaking, in Italy simply being drunk is itself an offense, and it is certainly not an excuse for other types of behavior.

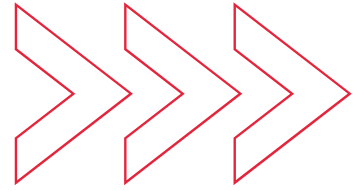
How can I meet Italians?

Italians can be guarded and reserved individuals at first. As with many Europeans constantly surrounded by foreigners, they may not seem friendly at first, but give them a chance. In order to meet Italians it is suggested that Americans not go out together in large groups, as this tends to intimidate the locals. Italians will be less likely to approach a group of Americans than just two or three of you. It is also easier to meet Italian students if you make an effort to speak their language. Upon hearing Italian, they will recognize that you are open to learning more about them and their culture. Also please be aware that Italians do not award a lot of personal space. They will typically stand or sit very close to one another, often touching each other on the arm or shoulder. This may make you feel uncomfortable at first, but you can observe the people around you to determine what is considered normal.

One of the best ways to make friends with the local students is to participate in an exchange, where you will help an Italian student practice their English and they will help you practice your Italian. The FUA Student Life Department office may be able to help set up an exchange for you.

As with any initial learning experience, you will encounter people who do not understand you and whom you will not understand. This is part of the learning experience, and the only way for you to overcome the language barrier is to immerse yourself in your language classes and make an active effort to learn the Italian language. Frustration is a natural emotion, but do not let it overwhelm you, as your skills will improve daily!

Everyday Life: Culture



National Holidays

The following is a list of Italy's national holidays. Please keep in mind that many local holidays, saints' days and festivals are also observed. In August, particularly during the weeks either side of Ferragosto, when most of the country flees to the coast, many towns are dead, with shops, bars and restaurants closed and a reduced public transport service. Local religious holidays don't generally close down shops and businesses for the whole day, but they do mean that hotels will be fully booked. On Italy's official national holidays, everything closes down except bars and restaurants.

FUA will be closed on:

January 1 New Year's Day

January 6 Epiphany

Easter Sunday

Easter Monday (Monday following Easter - Pasquetta)

April 25 Liberation Day

May 1 Labor Day

June 2 Italian National Holiday

June 24 San Giovanni (Patron Saint)

August 15 Assumption

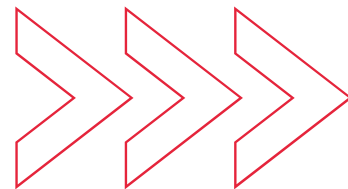
November 1 All Saints' day

December 8 Immaculate Conception

December 25 Christmas Day

December 26 Saint Stephen's day

Staying In Touch



Cell Phones

For information about cell phones abroad, please see:

ASA PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Time Difference

The following are the number of hours BEHIND Italy each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
9 hours	8 hours	7 hours	6 hours

So, if it is 6pm in Italy, then it is 12 noon Eastern, 11am Central, and 9am Pacific.

For date and time around the world, to help schedule meetings, sunrise and sunset, use the [Time and Date](#) website.

Computers & Internet

Should I bring a laptop? YES. You will have free wireless Internet access on campus and in your program housing. In addition, Florence University of the Arts has a free computer lab in each building with printers.

HELPFUL TIPS

For information about using a plug adapter with your laptop,
see PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS