

SES ITALY STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM 2017 HANDBOOK

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 39-333-683-3808 Emergency number
 (You must add a 011 if calling from US)

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 arrival)

Program Commandments

- You are a family. You take care of each other when you go out, traveling, at all times. Share meals, support each other, invite different people to travel with you. Be inclusive! Look out for each other. This is not Pullman.
- You attend EVERY class. No excuses. If you are grown up enough to be out late, you are grown up enough to do what needs to be done in the morning.

Pre-departure, final check list (after application is submitted to Global Learning)

- Complete CAPA application -- due November 2016 (includes room requests)
- Complete Passport & Visa passport forms and Medical form (Global Learning)
- Mandatory SES pre-departure meeting and GL meeting November 30, CUE 420; 4-6
- Purchase airline ticket, coordinate with others via Facebook group
- Register with the US Department of State <https://travelregistration.state.gov>
- Contact bank and credit card companies to inform them of your travel. Ask for bank partners in Florence with lower ATM fee, emergency international phone number.
- Review CAPA website <http://www.capa.org/florence>

Arrival

- At a European airport find an ATM and get some Euro currency.
- Jet lag is real.
 - Start adjusting to Italy time schedule before you depart.
 - Avoid alcoholic drinks on plane. Drink a lot of water. Be careful about sleep aids like Ambien etc. Consider Melatonin.
 - Stay awake in daylight in Italy and get in the sun.
- CAPA center arrival & first days.
 - Get to CAPA Center, Via Pandolfini 20 on February 1.
 - Get free taxi from CAPA to apartment.
 - Apartment will have welcome basket with some supplies.
 - Orientation at CAPA Center (Mandatory) – time to be determined.
 - Walking tour of Florence follows orientation.

Airports ...

If you arrive at the Florence (FLR) Airport ...

- **Shuttle bus** -- “*Vola in bus*” leaving from the airport every half hour (5:30am-11:45pm)
- **Taxi.** If you decide to take a taxi from the Airport to CAPA, the fare will be around 30€ (euros).

If you arrive at Rome Airport (Fiumicino, FCO)

- Train (**Leonardo** Train, € 9) from *Fiumicino* to Rome **Termini** Railway Station and from there, take a train to Florence **Santa Maria Novella (SMN)** Railway Station (**Eurostar** train, about € 45). Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20

If you arrive at Milan Airport (Malpensa)

- Train from airport to Milano Centrale Railway Station
 - directly from the Terminal 1 by Ferrovie Nord Milano trains,
 - or, via Gallarate, by Trenitalia trains.
- From Milano Centrale Railway Station get a train to Florence. **Santa Maria Novella (SMN)** Railway Station. Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20

If you arrive at Pisa Airport

- Train to Florence **Santa Maria Novella (SMN)** Railway Station. Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20

Money

- Get a debit and a credit card. Have at least two cards. They need to be “chip” cards.
- Credit cards are now widely accepted.
- You will use a “*bancomat*” to get cash. There is a per transaction fee.
- Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them of your travel plans -- otherwise they will stop accepting your card!! No Fun.
- Ask about bank partners in Florence that may charge a lower ATM fee. Ask for emergency phone number to use while abroad if your card is lost, etc.
- Banks in Italy are generally a pain, so avoid if you can and set everything up before.
- Traveler’s checks are hard to use and are no longer recommended.

Communication

Staying in touch with home...

- Apartments WILL have WIFI, but speed is slow. Don’t plan on watching movies.
- Generally, you will use E-mail, Skype, and Facebook on a computer, tablet, or smart phone app (see below).
- Computers and WIFI are available at CAPA. WIFI is available free in fewer locations than in US. However, internet cafes with by-the-hour WIFI & on-site computers plans are widely available.

Your cell phone?

- Check with your provider for international service availability and rates.
- You will probably either sign up for international service or discontinue your phone service
- If you suspend service, bring your cell phone and use it as a mini-tablet.

Get a cell phone in Europe...

- Cell phones in Europe are often of pre-pay, unblocked, swappable SIMM card type. They also operate on a different frequency/protocol. If you happen to have an unlocked cell phone that uses European frequencies and has swappable SIMM cards you can get a SIMM card in Italy for that phone.
- You can also swap out and get new SIMM cards as you move from country to country when travelling. This cuts down on local phone costs. Dual SIMM card phones are useful but tend to be expensive and hard to find in USA.
- More about cell phones →

However, a good bet is...

- CAPA has a cell phone provider. They suggest you wait until orientation for information. They will have a provider (Piccell) come to the site to provide phones (or SIMM cards) at orientation. NOT required, but recommended as this is the cheapest, easiest option and it provides easy and cheap communication within the group.
- You can arrange a telephone before you get to Italy through Piccell. Evidently they can even deliver it in USA. E-mail at info@piccellwireless.com and web at www.piccellwireless.com.
- In any case, use your cell phone sparingly. Voice and Data will usually be more expensive than US. Monitor charges carefully.

More phone info.

- Recharging your pre-paid phone. You can “*ricarica*” your phone at many places, including phone kiosks, internet cafes, supermarkets and ‘*tabaccheria*’ (magazine stands or *edicola*).

Safety & Medical Issues

- Watch out for each other in Florence and when you travel.
- **AIUTA!** Emergency tel. number. The 911 is U.S only. In Italy and many European countries, the emergency number is **112** (general). Ambulance in Italy is **118**.
- If you have an emergency in Florence or Europe ...
 - If in danger, leave area.
 - If safe, stay put.
 - Contact CAPA when safe.
 - Contact Hayley or Phil when safe.
 - Contact your family – be careful with social media.
- Medical concerns
 - Existing health issues– inform faculty, complete Global Learning form.
 - Medical issue in Florence – inform faculty and CAPA immediately.
 - No illegal drugs will be tolerated – Stupid, Dangerous, 1-way trip home at your expense.
 - Prescriptions – bring enough for stay and keep in bottle.
 - Over the counter – bring what you like; but there are pharmacies in Italy/Europe (*farmacia*).



What to Pack

A former participant says... "I suggest talking to the people they are living with beforehand so that people aren't bringing multiples of the same things (mostly toiletries like hair spray, shampoos, hair straighteners, etc.

(PW&HC: We recommend no hair dryer and minimal toiletries. These are fun and practical to buy in Italy.)



General info

- Luggage: Check airline baggage rules re weight and dimensions for carry-ons and checked luggage. European rules are different. Checked baggage weight is generally less than US, and carry-ons are smaller.
- On cobblestones, 2-wheel roller-type can be better than 4-wheel spinners.
- Don't pack more than you can carry. You will have to get it around the airport and into the taxi and around the streets. Your apartment may be upstairs - no elevator.
- Less is more – apartments have a washing machine (but no drier).
- Also, you will want room to take stuff home.
- Cold when we arrive, warm when we leave. Ave high in Feb is 53, in April is 65.
- Include travel bag/back pack for short trips. Euro airlines may allow small bags but not US carry-on size. Overhead bins are much smaller. For cheap airlines there are strict size rules and usually fees.
- **TIP.** Shop for small and large items in Italy – sales in February
- Bring a towel, bed linen not needed. (suggestion: bring an old towel, leave behind)
- Don't plan on shipping to or from Italy (especially to Italy) – Expensive and a hassle.
- Don't bring anything you will be sad if you lose.
- **TIP.** Consider a packable "travel cocoon" for hostels & week-ends.

Electronics

- Computer or tablet? Optional. CAPA has computers and WIFI as noted above. However, most students are happy to have a tablet or computer with them.
- General rule: don't bring appliances. E.g., buy hairdryer with apartment mates.
- **Electricity:** outlets and voltage/ampereage differ. USA stuff will not work unless it is adaptable for 110 or 240 (sometimes there is switch, but many electronics just recognize it). You will need several plug adapters for the Italian type outlet (two circles and in two sizes). Converters are necessary only if you bring something that **must run** on 110.

Clothing

- Walking shoes/boots. (But stylish -- it's Italy.) There are puddles and cobblestones and dog poo.
- Warm indoor wear. Apartments may be colder than we are used to, bring slippers.
- Outdoor: rain and mild winter. If you plan to travel in mountains or ski, appropriate heavier wear.
- Italians generally do not wear shorts.
- Italians generally dress less casually than American youth. Think style/appropriate.
- Churches/sites often require covered shoulders (no tank tops) and no shorts for guys and girls.

Student life in Florence – *Appartamento*

- Apartment information by January 18 via email from CAPA with information packet.
- Apartments of 3-6 students from our group (usually).
- Usually a 20-30 minute walk or bus ride (*autobus*).
- Apartments are in old buildings, sometimes a bit quirky and cooler/hotter (seasonal) than US.
- If problem? - inform CAPA immediately so they can interact with landlord.
 - Respect each other ...
 - Include each other in activities, trips, dinners, etc.
 - Apartment living – respect space and others living nearby.
 - Work together – cook together, clean your space.
 - Academics – respect ideas and contributions of other.



Shopping

- Supermarkets: Self-bagging & buy your bag (*sachetto, busta*)
- Save room in your luggage for your new Italian leather jacket, etc.
- “Tobacco” and magazine shops. *Tabaccheria* and *Edicola* sell many things including (local) *bus tickets*, lottery tickets, postal stamps.
- Stores (*negozio*)
- Jewelry – *Ponte Vecchio* etc.
- Leather, clothing etc, (ask CAPA).
- Large stores (e.g., ZARA) near center & in suburbs (IKEA, supermarkets).

Shopping Italiano

- **May I help you? *Prego***
- **Next = *prossimo***
- **How much? = *quanto costa?***
- **This one = *questo*; that one = *quello***
- **That's enough, thank you = *basta, grazie***

- Luxury stores near Palazzo Strozzi.
- Many small specialty stores.
- Shopping fun - Local markets
- Covered central market near San Lorenzo.
- Mercato Centrale great large indoor market with awesome food court.
- Local outdoor markets in a variety of places.
- Vegetable & fruit stands. Do not handle produce at the stalls or outdoor markets.
- Bargain, especially at the stalls and outdoor markets.

CAPA Neighborhood Amenities

- CAPA is located in the *Centro Storico* near lots of things.
- A small supermarket is about 2-3 blocks away. A larger supermarket is within walking distance and close to where some of your apartments may be. Other specialized food shops and vegetable-fruit stands are also nearby.
- There is a *bancomata* about two blocks away.
- There is a friendly little bar/coffee place right around the corner.
- There are about 10 restaurants and 3 *gelateria* within a few blocks. These include
 - A “kabob” stand (Turkish gyro).
 - Several sandwich places *panino* (one sandwich), *panini* (plural)
 - Pizza by the slice place.
 - A few pizzeria, *tratoria*, and even a *ristorante* or two.
- It is lovely to walk around in the evening. Many of the major sites and many major pedestrian walkways are lit up at night. Especially fun Sunday afternoon.

Classes/academics/learning

- 4 day schedule; use your week-ends for “informal” learning
- **Attendance is mandatory.**
 - Come to class and come prepared. We expect **100%** attendance unless you have cholera, pneumonia etc.
 - Respect ideas and contributions of others.
 - Engage with material, instructors, each other.
 - Italian instructors tend to be more formal; be courteous.
 - There are two mandatory (and fun) field trips that may be scheduled on Fridays. There will be a number of optional field trips, some on Fridays, so check with events at CAPA before you plan week-end trips.
- We expect you to learn about Florence, Tuscany, Italy, Europe on your week-ends! See Travel.



- Materials.
 - Purchase **BEFORE** departure – The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall. By Christopher Hibbert. 1999. Harper Perennial. Should be about \$15.
 - The EU class may require a book to be purchased in Florence.
 - Your Italian class material will be provided in Florence for a fee.
 - Recommended: purchase a phrase book and you might want a dictionary. Both are available in Florence but fun to get before you leave. E.g., Rick Steves & Lonely Planet.
 - Maps and tourist guides are fun & useful. Available in Florence. E.g., Rick Steves & Lonely Planet.
 - There is an excellent English language bookstore near the Duomo. There are two very large bookstores as well as numerous small and interesting ones. All museums have tourist guides, postcards, knick-knacks, etc.

Travel

General

- We encourage you to travel. Travel is part of your study abroad education which is why you have three-day weekends (most Fridays).
- Make your neighborhood -- Florence, Tuscany, Italy -- first priority. Tourists pay \$1000s to get here, where you now LIVE!
- Use “Florence for Fun” and watch for other events in the weekly CAPA newsletter and posted on the bulletin board.
- Remember, include different people in different trips; don’t travel in the same pack on all trips.
- Plan for spring break week.

U-Rail Pass?

- Generally, a U-rail pass does not save anything as the terms are fairly inflexible.
- However, if you have some specific regions/times you plan to travel, especially if they overlap with start or end, it would be good to investigate.

Buses (l'autobus)

- There are city and regional buses. Regional buses are an alternative to train travel, especially for the little towns like Sienna, San Gimignano, and Volterra.

City buses

- You will receive a bus pass for Florence. If you are in another city you will buy bus tickets, usually at a *Tabaccheria* or *Edicola*. Sometimes there are ticket selling machines on the busses. *Tabaccherie* sell lottery tickets and stamps as well.
- There are no on-board conductors to take your ticket. You just get on the bus. If you are caught without a ticket – really big fine.

- Also, city busses can get you to places like the big shops (Ikea) and neighboring communities (Fiesole)

Train travel in Italia – Basics (il treno)

- Ticket can be bought at a ticket counter or from self-service machines (chip card required.) Machines speak multiple languages and take credit cards! Sometime the machines require a chip credit card. Most ticket people know some English, and some speak it well, but you cannot count on it. Ticket machines are usually easier and faster.
 - Tickets will be by train type and class. Check the '*orario*' for the train schedules. There is a schedule of usual trains posted somewhere, then there is an electronic display (schedule board) with trains coming and going similar to an airport.
 - Note that some tickets are associated with reserved seats on certain trains, while others are just tickets between two locations. Be sure you know which kind of ticket you have.
- Ticket must be validated (yellow time clocks near platforms). Usually the ticket is good for 24 hours once validated. '*Occupato*' – some seats are reserved. You can reserve seats (more money) when you get tickets. Tickets will say which *treno*, which *binario*, which car (*wagon*), and seat (if reserved)
- Platform (*Binario*) number. You need to know which platform and which train. The platforms usually list the trains, but there are often trains coming and going quickly so you should “pre-position” yourself near the anticipated platform, and check to make sure that the platform for your train has not changed. For little stations like Pisa, not a big deal; for Roma and Milano lots of platforms and trains.
- You may not see your destination on the schedule board. The schedule will show the final destination of the train so check to find if your destination is on that line.
- If not reserved, find a car of the appropriate class – usually just 1 and 2, where one is higher.

Bus (or train) Italiano:
Prossima fermata. Next stop
Scusi Sorry (I stepped on
your foot)
Permisso. Excuse me,
coming through.
Uscita. Exit



Recommended pre-departure reading & viewing:

- Reading:
 - John Grisham-*Playing for Pizza* and *The Broker*;
 - Under the Tuscan Sun* (Frances Mayes).
 - The Enchantress of Florence* (Salman Rushdie)
 - Brunelleschi's Dome* (Ross King)
 - Italian phrase book such as Rick Steves or Lonely Planet

- Review Italian language book and guide books; check out www.duolingo.com
- Watch a few Italian movies:
 - Classics: Bicycle Thief, La Dolce Vita; Il Postino,
 - Newish: Under the Tuscan Sun; La Vita e Bella; Bread & Tulips, Mediterraneo (1991)
- Watch some Italian TV shows (PBS) (sub-titles)
 - Detective Montalbano (1999–) "Il Commissario Montalbano" (*original title*)

Things to Do, Week One

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climb the <i>Giotto Campanile</i> (tower next to Duomo) ▪ View city from Piazzale Michaelangelo, at sunset ▪ Visit Piazza della Signore & Loggia (statues) ▪ Visit Piazza della repubblica | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross Ponte Vecchio and ▪ Eat gelato! ▪ Drink café at a bar (stand up) ▪ Have <i>aperitivo</i> and watch people at an outside cafe ▪ Sit on steps by Spedale degli Innocenti ▪ WALK around town |
|---|--|

First trips outside Florence (treno)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pisa & leaning tower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lucca, rent bicycles (bicicletti) & ride around wall |
|--|--|

Student thoughts/advice travelling to Italy on SES study abroad program

“...suggestions to the new students going... I think my biggest one is just to not over plan. By that I mean to not go into the experience with this idea that they are going to see everything in this set schedule that they have created beforehand. That sometimes, the best things can come from spontaneous events like taking a 4:00 a.m. train to Venice to get there for the last weekend of Carnevale or spending the afternoon wandering around the Boboli Gardens “just because the sun was out” when you probably should have been studying for that Italian exam. I know that this suggestion may seem pretty basic, but I went over there with these great expectations that I was going to see everything Italian in the first month and have the rest of the time to travel around Europe. But, when it came down to it, I saw everything I needed to over those three months and saw enough of the rest of the Europe to know just how extraordinary Italy is and that I wouldn’t have wanted to spend my time living anywhere else (if that makes sense). -- AM’09