

Getting There by Train

The train in Italy is very efficient and is used. Beware, however, that train strikes are frequent. They are usually announced ahead of time, so research beforehand to avoid any inconveniences. One very important thing to remember is to always validate your ticket. Take your ticket and stamp the date and time on it with one of the validation boxes around the train station. Failure to do this could cost you 30-60 Euro.

Getting There by Bus

Buses are quite a bit cheaper, take quite a bit longer, and are a bit less reliable. They are still a good form of transportation, just not as common and consistent as the train.

Staying in Hostels

Hostels in Italy, and in most of Europe, are generally very safe. There are various types of hostels, many of them having “dorm” type rooms, where you stay with up to 15 other people, or private rooms, which you can book for a small group. Also, in some cities there are “camping” hostels. Do a little research on the specific one, but these can often be a great deal with the same amenities as a regular hostel.

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

Italy Train Timetables:

<http://www.trenitalia.com/>

Buying a Rail Pass:

<http://www.raileurope.com/>

Booking Hostels:

<http://www.hostelworld.com/>



Study Abroad in

Italy



Cultural Tips

In Italy, and in most cases, Europe in general, there are a few important cultural differences to consider to avoid awkward and uncomfortable situations.

-->The most obvious cultural difference: the language. In Italy, opposed to a lot of European countries, they do not speak English very frequently or very well, so learn at least enough Italian to get by before going.

-->In Italy, like a lot of European countries, they often do not take credit or debit cards. Obviously bring one to get money out of ATMs, but in small transactions like buying groceries or souvenirs, it is expected that you pay in cash.

-->When you are buying fruit at the grocery store, it is unacceptable to pick the fruit up with your bare hands. You must use a glove.

-->If you are a picky eater, be prepared to try what seems like normal food at a slightly off temperature. After the first taste of room-temperature milk, you will understand.

-->During the middle of the day, many stores close for a period of time. This "break," depending on the store, can last from 2-4 hours.

-->People in Italy, and in Europe in general, dress very nicely. You won't see people walking around in jeans and a t-shirt very often, so if you don't want to stick out, dress accordingly.

-->If you do not like fizzy water, make sure you specify "no gas" or "still" to the waiter or read it on the bottle if you are buying from a grocery store.

-->When at a restaurant, the server will be annoyed if you ask to split a check. To avoid a tense situation, try to pay all together.

Where to Visit

When studying in Italy, there are a few must-see places:

Rome

The capital of Italy. The Colosseum, Vatican, Pantheon, Trevi Fountain and Roman Forum are must see attractions.

Florence

A picturesque Italian town, renown for its art and architecture, Florence has many attractions, but the main attraction is simply its beauty. From Piazza Michelangelo, you can see a panoramic view of the city including the ubiquitous red rooftops and the Duomo. Take a short train ride to Pisa to see the Leaning Tower.

Venice

There aren't many "tourist attractions" in Venice except St. Mark's Square. But, dig a little deeper and you will find plenty to see. Take the water taxi, the form of public transportation on the island since there are no cars, to Murano to check out the glass factories. Also, if studying abroad in the Spring, check out the Carnival, a festival during which people wear cool masks.

Milan

Go to Milan if you like shopping, fashion and design. There is a large shopping area around the Piazza Duomo.

Cinque Terre

Cinque Terre consists of five small villages located on cliffs of the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. Take a few days to hike between them.

Venice



Cinque Terre



Rome

