

Elon Center in Florence

Orientation Guide

Forms Due

- Course review form/Flatmate Preference Form/Health Form/Risk and Responsibilities/Flight Itinerary/Passport info

Highlights of Italian Culture

The Italian Pace

In Italy, patience is truly a virtue. Take a restaurant, for instance. Italian servers may seem to be ignoring you, but in reality, they just like to give customers time and space to talk and socialize. The slower pace and long waits also apply to many public offices and events. Lines in offices are often long and service is not very efficient compared to U.S. standards. Offices do not always open on time and events do not start promptly. Italians do not like to stress over things, but rather tend to relax and enjoy life to the fullest with a slower pace. And since you are a foreigner in Italy, try to make an effort to adapt to this culture.

Moderation

One of the most fundamental rules of Italian culture is moderation. At first glance, Italians might seem to drink a lot, but upon a closer look, quite the opposite is true. They do drink - spumante to celebrate, limoncello to digest, aperitivo to taste and vino to mix with food - but with moderation, not in order to get drunk. In fact, the quickest way to lose the respect of your Italian friends and neighbors is to get drunk in public. Drinking on the streets is also considered very disrespectful.

Society

Family has a very important role in Italy and life revolves around the family. The majority of young adults move out of the family homes very late (in their 30's), partly because of unbearably high living expenses, and partly due to strong sentimental attachments to the family. Dating rituals are complex and very different from the U.S. For example, it will often take months, even years, before a dating couple actually goes out alone. The beginning of a relationship is always filled with group outings and only after quite some time does a couple separate itself from the group. Since the majority of Italian young adults live with their parents, the occasions to invite boyfriends or girlfriends to their house are also rare. Living together before marriage is slowly gaining popularity, but many people still condemn "illegal couples."

MONUMENTS & MUST-SEES

- The **Duomo and Baptistery** in the central piazza
- The church of **San Lorenzo** and the surrounding outdoor market
- The **Uffizi Art Gallery**, one of the oldest and most famous art museums in the world
- The **Accademia Art Gallery**, home to Michelangelo's David
- The **Bargello museum**, housing the largest Italian collection of Gothic and Renaissance sculptures
- **Piazzale Michelangelo** and its magnificent views of the city
- The **Ponte-Vecchio** bridge, built in 1345 to replace an ancient wooden bridge
- The church of **Santa Croce**, which houses the tombs of Ghiberti, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, and Galileo

CULTURAL ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Florence has endless activities for international visitors to enjoy. Listed below are some different cultural activities to do while in Florence. You can do many of these activities on your own, with friends, or they may be sponsored by ISA. Upon arrival to Florence, different sponsored cultural activities will be announced throughout your program abroad.

Pitti Palace

Dating back to 1458, the Pitti Palace gives students a glimpse into the past and life during the Renaissance. Later owned by the Medici family, today the palace houses relics from the past such as paintings, plates, jewelry and clothing.

Picnic in the Boboli Gardens

Pack a lunch and bring a blanket and head to the beautiful Boboli Gardens of the Pitti Palace! A great way to take advantage of great weather. Gather with friends, practice your Italian and enjoy the greenery of Florence.

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Soccer Matches

During soccer season, attend a local game and experience the thrill of Italy's favorite sport. Don't forget your purple attire, the official color of the Florence soccer team, Fiorentina.

Open-Air Markets

There are many famous open-air markets throughout the city. One of the most famous is located near Piazza San Lorenzo. Walk through the markets for leather and paper goods or head into the Central Market for fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish, and cheese. There is a large, outdoor market at the park called "Le Cascine." Prices there are quite inexpensive, especially for clothing.

Piazzale Michelangelo

Take a walk with friends up to Piazzale Michelangelo on the south side of the river, which has one of the best views of the city.

Flights

- Group flight option is booked with Aladdin Travel through the portal link provided in the group flight instructions handout (available on Elon Abroad)
- Arrive/depart on correct dates; housing dates are non-negotiable
- Submit flight itinerary before you leave campus at the end of the term prior to study abroad
- Transfer to and from the airport will be provided if you take the group flight. You will be responsible for your own transfers if you are flying independent of the group and your flight times differ significantly from the group.

Visas

- Please refer to the visa instructions provided to you in the visa session (and attached to your Elon Abroad application profile)
- You will need two different visas
 - Long stay student visa
 - "Permit to Stay"

Academics

- Academic courses are located on the program brochure page. You will also have the opportunity to enroll in other co-curricular classes such as voice lessons, music lessons, dance instruction, and other art classes (some of these might cost extra).
- Students enroll in 16 credit hours (typically 4 courses)
- Your semester schedule—complete with class field trips and weekend study excursions—will be given to you about 1 month before you depart for Florence. (Please do not book any personal travel until you have those dates!)
- Academics abroad: Different than what you're used to (time in class, lecture style, grading, expectations)
 - You will have professors of both U.S. and Italian backgrounds. They will have different styles than you're used to, and even the professors of U.S. background will be more Italian in some respects.
- You are required to take **four** courses while you are abroad.

Living in Florence

Housing

- Housing is apartment-style; apartments are located in the historic district of Florence, located convenient to restaurants and local stores.
 - You will be in an apartment with other Elon students
 - Florence is old. The apartment buildings in which you will be living, as they are in the historic district, are also old. You should adjust your expectations accordingly.
 - Apartment buildings may have multiple student apartments, but will not be exclusively student housing. There will be local Florentines in your building. Please keep this in mind.

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- Housing has shared living/dining/kitchen area, fully furnished and the kitchen will have all cooking utensils, cookware, silverware and dishes.
- The apartments are single-sex.
- Apartments have internet access (wired or wireless)
- You are responsible for keeping your apartment clean.
- Remember you are not in a Dorm!!!
- There is no meal plan
- Keep in mind that apartment buildings are not guaranteed to be smoke-free as there are full-time residents
- Linens are provided.

Money

- Program costs are listed on GEC website
- Billing is the same as if you were on campus and should be paid the same way
- Financial aid/loans: Sign check before you leave this semester; check with Bursar's office/Financial Planning
- Create a budget, keeping in mind:
 - Exchange rate (visit xe.com)
 - \$500-1,000 per month for books, meals, supplies, NOT including extra travel
- Take access to money in more than 1 form (debit cards, credit cards, travelers' checks)
- Inform banks/credit card companies you'll be using your card abroad
- Be aware of international transaction/services fees
 - You may want to research other banks for what best suits your needs

Health and Safety

- Medications
 - Must meet with your doctor before you leave
 - Need a note from doctor explaining condition, medication and why such a large supply
 - Obtain a sufficient amount for the full time you're abroad (about 3 months) and keep in original containers
 - Make sure medication is legal in Italy
 - Make copies of your prescriptions
 - Pack in your carry-on
- Must maintain personal health insurance in addition to international study abroad insurance
- Utilize the iNext website (see study abroad website) and take advantage of all it has to offer
 - You'll be registered approximately a few weeks prior to departure
- Check CDC website to see what, if any, immunizations/vaccinations are recommended or required
- Make a plan with your parents in the event of an emergency; discuss expectations
- Remember, Italian laws apply to you; make smart decisions – don't think "nothing will happen to me"
- Italian emergency numbers:
 - Police & general emergency – 113
 - Fire – 115
 - Medical - 118

Packing

- Pack as light as you can as you will have to manage your luggage on your own
- Keep airline (especially domestic) weight, size and number restrictions, as well as baggage fees, in mind
- In your carry-on, bring:
 - Passport & any other documents relevant to visa
 - Copies of your passport, debit/credit cards, important travel documents
 - Contact information and address for AEF
 - **Two changes of clothes in case your luggage doesn't arrive with you – this is very important as this happens often on flights in to the Florence airport!**
 - Prescriptions/medications

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Communication

- Arrival plan with your parents – it may not be realistic for you to be in communication immediately. Please ask your parents to allow at least 24 hours for you to make contact.
- Methods and frequency of keeping in touch
 - Phones, blogs, journals, mass emails, Skype
- Be sure to check your e-mail for communications from Elon and AEF

Laptops

- Bringing a laptop is up to you, but it is recommended
- There are a student lounge with wireless internet access, and there are cafes around the center where students can access internet
- Make sure it can go on European voltage; most likely need an adapter in order to charge your battery.

Elon Campus Mail and Elon Email

- All first-class mail will be forwarded to your permanent address on record
- You must contact all other mail individually (i.e. magazines, Netflix)
- Be sure you monitor your Elon email as you will be receiving important emails regarding registration and housing