

## GUIDE FOR STUDYING IN ITALY



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This brochure has been compiled from the experiences and knowledge of several European Studies students who went on exchange to Italy. It is written from the students point of view and is updated yearly. We hope you find its numerous hints and practical tips useful during your stay overseas. May it help you get past the “survival” stage quickly and contribute to your enjoyment of the Italian experience next year.

When you come back to Guelph, you will be expected to return this brochure (or a copy) to me, with appropriate corrections and additions, so that it can be updated for the benefit of the next group of outgoing students.

Bon voyage!

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(Responsible for ESP Students studying in France)

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### **Italy in General**

#### **Documentation**

Assembling all of the necessary documentation for a year abroad takes a fair amount of time and money. Start collecting all of these documents *early*. It is not possible to get all this done in the last three weeks before you leave!!! Here is a rough idea of what you will need.

In order to live in Italy for the duration of the academic year you must have

- A passport; preferably valid for a few months after you expect to return from Europe
- Visa (add info)
- Birth certificate (check specifications)
- A letter of permission from the University of Guelph
- A letter of acceptance by the Italian university of your choice (within the limits of ESP partnerships, of course)
- A statement of financial support from your parents
- Proof of health insurance, which can be obtained from OHIP (235 King St., Kitchener)

Just before you go make sure your credit card will be valid for your whole trip. Phone your credit card company so that they know that you are going abroad and won't think that your card has been stolen and cancel it on you! Take your wallet to a photocopier and make 3-4 copies of everything that will be going with you to Italy. Leave two copies at home with your family and take a couple with you. This way, if you happen to lose your wallet cancelling cards will be much easier. Also, remember if this does happen to have phone numbers and email contacts at your Canadian bank so that they can send you new cards.

## **Banking**

You might want to visit a lawyer and have power of attorney given to one of your parents so that they can access your financial matters. You could also consider opening a joint account with your parents. Make sure your visa/Master Card pin number is not longer than 4 digits, or it won't work internationally. It might be a good idea to set up Internet banking. This is the easiest way to keep track – not only of your home bank, but also your Italian bank account. You can also use your debit card to withdraw money from European bank machines but your bank will charge you a fee. You can also look into different types of accounts offered by your bank in Canada that might allow you to withdraw money with a monthly charge for the account. Get a bank-authorized letter of support (for apartment and for opening an account in Italy). Having a debit card with a chip makes paying much easier, because automatic machines (when paying for train tickets and other things) only accept cards with chips. Also tell your bank that you will be overseas so that they don't freeze your account because of irregular activity. Some Italian bank machines will not take your card and state there is a card error, try different machines before calling your bank at home.

## **Things to take to Italy:**

### *School Things*

10-15 passport size photos (to give to professors and attach to documents)  
BIC pens (ridiculously expensive! Everyone uses fountain pens.)  
Italian grammar reference  
Italian/English dictionary  
Day-timer or calendar  
USB stick – many profs will gladly let exchange students copy the PPT slides onto their USB stick

### *Clothing*

Bathing suit  
Hiking boots and gear  
Light robe  
Sandals or slippers  
Winter gear if you plan to ski!!  
Rain gear is also useful

### *Helpful Items*

Blank book to use as a journal  
Calculator and ruler  
Money belt (make sure to use it if you travel!)

Digital camera (invest in rechargeable batteries, makes life a lot easier... make sure to have a Large SD card for the camera, you don't want to run out of space for photos)

Guidebooks

ISIC card, available free from our Travel Cuts (this was pretty useless for the most part).

Towels

Travel alarm clock

### *Health and Toiletry Supplies*

Contact lens solution (\$10 in Guelph, \$20-25 in Italy) Although it might be more expensive in Italy, liquids do factor into the strict weight restrictions for your baggage which could cost you more in the end!

Convertor/adaptor for hairdryer etc. (Very important! These are hard to find in Italy. Get a good one!)

Cough syrup, aspirin/Tylenol, Alka-Seltzer

Prescription medicine, enough to last your stay. If your insurance doesn't cover this, take as much as possible, then have it sent as you can (birth control packs fit in Hallmark cards, from Mom...!)

\* You might want to take your own music with you, given the price of CDs in Italy. You may also want to invest in *Italian* music. That's the point! They are pretty much the same price anyway.

\* Cigarettes are much stronger than in Canada but somewhat cheaper too. Second-hand smoke will likely suffice and its free!

\* Some popular imports (stuff we've had sent to us: Kool-Aid, peanut butter, Kraft Dinner, vitamins), although surviving on foreign food alone is quite possible and even highly recommended from a cultural point of view.

\* Memory cards for your camera. If possible invest in a laptop computer AND external hard drive. You will have wireless connections at school and in libraries. This way you have a CD and DVD player, word processor, dictionary, etc.

### **Suggested Reading**

*First Time Europe* (A Rough Guide Special), by Louis CasaBianca

This is a great guide for new travellers. I'd been to Europe many times before, but I still found tons of useful ideas here. At \$15, it's worth every penny. Routard Guides are good.

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) is a great site to use when traveling.

You will need a good, thorough guide to Italy. Don't rely on the Italy section of a European guide; it will not be detailed enough for travel off the beaten path. All the travel guide companies will offer comprehensive guides; buy the one you like best. READ the introductory sections BEFORE you go. They are often full of good tips. The sections on history, art, and architecture will also give your trip more meaning. Michelin's Green Guides are excellent in this respect, but they usually cover a small region only.

If you plan on travelling outside of your exchange country, buy another guide for all of Europe.

### **Airline Tickets**

I did a fair amount of shopping around for the best deal on airfares and found Travel Cuts was the most reasonable. For other options, visit [www.airtransat.ca](http://www.airtransat.ca), [www.kayak.fr](http://www.kayak.fr), [www.redtag.ca](http://www.redtag.ca). It is best to book your flight as early as possible so you have the most choice of when to leave. Discuss options with your travel agent about changing return dates. Also keep in mind that some airlines do not allow you to book over 10 months in advance. If you plan on coming home for Christmas, book your flight as soon as you know when classes and exams will end.

Consider how you will manage your luggage - from airport to bus/train to taxi to residence desk, to room etc. If you are taking a lot of things, some airlines will give you permission to bring more than the normal weight, check it out before you get to the airport and are ordered to re-pack or stay home!

### **When to Arrive**

Do not arrive on a Sunday or holiday because you could have difficulties getting into residence, negotiating bus schedules, etc. Find out when classes will start and plan to arrive a few days early. Taking an intensive language course for foreigners before regular university classes begin is a good way to ease into European life and to meet other foreign students. You will get to know your surroundings and improve your language skills before the real school year starts. In the past, Guelph students have received Foreign-language course credits for this work upon presentation of the appropriate transcripts. (The stage includes more than reading, writing, listening and speaking skills – you have tours of your town, the nearby towns/cities, and wine/cheese tasting outings, with 50 other exchange students in the same boat as you). This is available in some exchange countries and universities but not all of them.

You will be very sorry if you do not have at least \$200 (CDN) worth of Euros in small bills when you arrive. Order this from your bank or currency-exchange a couple of weeks before leaving Canada. The best rates are at Global Currency (Gordon

and Kortright; Home Hardware plaza). This money will pay for your bus, cab, phone card (to let Mom know that you arrived safely), and perhaps a meal or two. Do not take travellers' cheques. They are not accepted anywhere.

### **Culture Shock**

You may have done lots of travelling before but you will find that moving to a foreign country for a year is entirely different. You will feel tired and frustrated quite often during the first few weeks in your new environment. The mind tires quickly when trying to struggle with a new language and taking in a new environment. Things that are automatic for you in Canada, such as taking the bus to school or going grocery shopping, will be challenging at first in a new country. Relax. In time, everything will become more natural and you will begin to find some more energy as your language improves. Talking with other foreign students can be therapeutic, but be careful to keep an open mind and positive spirits. Things *will* improve by Christmas and the second half of the year will fly by.

### **Meeting People**

#### **Socializing**

There is an organization affiliated with some of the Italian universities and universities in Europe it is called AEGEE. This organization is often connected with the international office and offers socializing events where you will be able to meet other exchange students. You can also meet a lot of new people in classes, as language classes are often small and make it easy to find friends.

Some Italians are very excited to meet a foreigner while others may come off as a little cold towards you since they want to speak your native tongue with you and not Italian. You can meet many more outgoing and social Italians in classes or when you are out and about in the city having a drink or lunch. Many Italians go out in the evenings from about 6pm to 9pm for a drink and the cities are always busy at this time with Italians of all ages.

#### **Men**

Italian men differ in many ways depending on the area they are from and their age. Young men around the ages of 20 to 26 are often in university and are not afraid of approaching a girl. Often, when they like a girl they love to chat to her all night and get easily jealous if she goes to talk to her friends thinking that the girl is not really into them. They like to socialize in groups of friends much like Canada. There are also a lot of younger teenagers who frequent bars and discotechs. Older men often do chat with younger girls but in a more friendly nature and are often either interested in foreigners or completely wanting to ignore them since they are not Italian girls.

## Problems

If you lose documents, contact the police immediately and fill out the necessary forms. **Under Italian law, all citizens AND tourists must carry some identification in case they are stopped and questioned by police.** Don't forget that you will be hanging around bus and train stations in a country where police searches are not uncommon. Bring photocopies.

## Banking

Opening a bank account is the most practical way to deal with daily life in Italy. You will need cheques to pay your rent and a European bank card (Carte Bleue(?)) is really convenient. **Get a bank-authorized letter of support for your apartment and for opening an account in Italy.** Choose a bank that is near your daily route to school so that you do not have to go out of your way. You will likely need your passport to open an account but the requirements will change with each different company. Some banks may offer you insurance on your bank card and cheque book or even money when you open an account. **This is done because the Italians do not check for identification before cashing a cheque.** In other words, if you lose your cheque book someone could steal the balance of your account. You also need to show your banking information to get a cell phone.

You can also keep your Canadian bank account and opt for a different way of getting money. Many Italian bank machines allow you to withdraw money and if you are able to pay for a VIP banking account you will often not be charged the PLUS fee, that would cost you 5 Canadian dollars or more per withdrawal. It is sometimes easier to opt for this option because some Italian banks will not allow you to have an account for less than a year or have very expensive monthly fees and their cards do not work in other European countries or even not allow you to withdraw from other ATMs.

Etiquette in banks and other service areas is a little different in Italy than what we are used to at home. In spite of the fact that there is a privacy line painted on the floor of the post office, people seem to see nothing wrong with crowding you at the teller's counter. Just get used to having someone peering over your shoulder to see how broke you are. Do not put away any large withdrawals in your money belt before leaving the bank, cash machine, or exchange booth. Thieves love to hang around waiting for tourists to fiddle with their money near a currency exchange. **Expect business to take longer.**

You can also have money sent from Canada but the service charge is expensive at both ends (a wire costs \$15.00, plus the exchange). Ask your home bank before you leave to find out how much this will cost. Your Canadian bank card *will not* work on all European machines (especially in England) in spite of what your bank will tell you, though it may work on most (with a charge each time). Bringing a cheque or



cash will cost you the least. Global currency services, on Gordon south of campus, will help you out. If you plan on withdrawing from a Canadian account, take out a lump sum so that you get charged all at once.

### **Telephones**

Getting a cell phone with “pay as you go” credit is recommended. Companies such as Tim, Wind and Vodafone all have pay as you go and often have promotions to pay for unlimited texts to cell phones of the same company for 1 euro a week. Download SKYPE on your computer, one of the best ways to talk... once you have struggled through the Internet issue.

The easiest and cheapest way to call home is Canada Direct. This service provides toll-free lines that give you direct access to a Canadian operator and then you are billed on your calling card at Canadian rates. A 'Call-Me' card is also a good idea. Call or write to Canada Direct for the listing of numbers or ask your travel agent (available at Travel Cuts). Keep this card with you when you are travelling to make phone calls easier.

### **Internet**

There are a handful of cafes/fast food places in town where you can use wireless on your own laptop/iPhone).

The best advice I can give is to wait until the other students move in and post an ad looking for someone to share with; however this may take a little while. If you require Internet promptly it is best to pay a bit more and get a reliable connection from France Telecom, because you may never be connected by other providers. Some providers offer USB Internet sticks- the sticks range in cost from 35-65 euros and then you pay a monthly fee between 10-14 euros per month. These are also good since you can use them anywhere and they work in most parts of Italy.

### **Electricity**

What volt power the country uses:

Buy a converter at home there are some that are available at Future Shop and Best Buy.

Have at least 2/3 adapters, since you will probably blow-out one for your hairdryer/straightener, and you can then use several electrical plugs at the same time. Remember to have an adaptor as well as a converter so that you can use smaller electronic chargers without worry. Make sure you also have an adapter for the UK if you plan on travelling, since it's different from continental Europe.

### **Libraries**

Libraries are generally difficult but different in each school and city. Worthwhile books are usually in storage; fill out a request card and wait half an hour to an hour to

get them. University libraries look more like high school ones at home due to lack of funding. (Short hours, limited computers/seating, strict no-food/drink rules... plus checking out books corresponds with your university level... you will miss the UOG library! The best advice is to be patient and try using the Internet as an alternative. It's worth while to get a membership at municipal libraries as well, as they have a varied collection of local/national music etc. (and guide books, so that you don't have to bring them!)

(If this information is right about your country just keep it. If not please make changes and any helpful suggestions)

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## **Restaurants**

Cost (generally):

Italian restaurants are quite expensive. There are often two courses in the meal; the first typically consists of pasta, then the second course is often a plate of meat or fish. With two courses your meal will be between 18-25 euros. You can get pizza at most restaurants and the cost is only between 5 and 8 euro. You should also always remember that water is sold in bottles at restaurants and that there is often a copperta [service fee] between 1-2 euros per person.

There are a lot of small cafes that offer small sandwiches and paninis that are good for lunches and most cafes do not have copertas just a different fee for have a cappuccino at a table or at the bar.

Italian food is famous around the world but keep in mind that it differs region to region and even city to city. Always try to look up information on typical foods to try from the places you visit or live in.

## **Train Travel**

### **Discounts:**

Always look on the Trenitalia website for in country or out of county deals sometimes they can save you a lot of money. Also when you look up going to places and there is a transfer if it looks expensive also try looking for trains that might leave a little later but are regional trains instead of the high speed because you can save up to about 40% in some cases.

**Where to buy:**

You are probably best to buy your tickets at a train station. There are machines that are easy to use and you can use them in English or you can try in Italian that way you won't get the voice that says please insert your money in the machine and everyone around knows you are a foreigner.

**How to check in:**

Once you have your ticket there are yellow machines in the station and often on the binary [tracks] you MUST remember to VALIDATE your ticket at these machine before you get on the train. The fee is now 50 euros if you have not validated your ticket. Once stamped by the machine it will say the station you left from and the time so the ticket man is able to see you purchased the correct ticket. If you want to buy an extra ticket or possibly go to a farther stop the ticket man is also able to take cash and give you a ticket that will suffice.

**Biking****Helmets**

You can purchase a helmet at most bike shops in town though in general most people do wear helmets.

**Riding on sidewalks or streets:**

Most Italians are used to bikes and mopeds speeding past them and often will make room for you on the street in larger down or in newer parts of the city there are designated bike lanes that offer you a bit more safety. Be careful on roundabouts since most cars wish to get through them as fast as possible. Many larger roundabouts have bike lanes on the pavement so you can pass through it without the worry of cars.

**Bike rental and buying bikes**

Some cities have a bike rental system but you often have to be a full time resident of the city. You can always go to one of the various bike shops within a city and ask if they have used bikes for sale. They range from 40 to 70 euros and are sometimes a cheaper alternative to renting.

**Staying in Touch**

School of Languages and Literatures main office at the U. of G. (519) 824-4120, ext 3883. Fax: (519) 763-9572 (Prof. Margot Irvine: ext 53182 E-mail: [mirvine@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mirvine@uoguelph.ca) )

Please send Prof. Mary Decoste ([mdecoste@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mdecoste@uoguelph.ca)) a list of the courses you would like to take once you've chosen them, and let her know how you are doing!

Your European Studies profs in Guelph love hear about your adventures in Europe and are always available for consultation.

Centre for International Programs: [goabroad@uoguelph.ca](mailto:goabroad@uoguelph.ca)

## The University System

- Ways that degrees and university programs are organized
- Any useful terms

Higher education is provided by universities, technical universities, university institutes, as well as by a wide range of academies, higher institutes/schools, especially, but not exclusively, in the artistic sector, and by a number of professional training institutions in a variety of fields related to commerce, e-technologies, fashion, industry, etc....At present, the university system includes 89 university institutions (55 state universities, 3 technical universities, 17 non-state legally-recognized university institutes, 2 universities for foreigners, 12 higher schools/institutes regulated by special legislation). Degree programmes are structured in credits (crediti formativi universitari-CFU at universities and crediti formativi accademici-CFA at AFAM institutions). A CFU or CFA corresponds to a minimum of 25 hours of work, time for personal study included. The average annual workload of a full-time student is usually fixed at 60 credits. The general access requirement is the Italian school leaving qualification, the Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato conclusivo dei Corsi di Istruzione Secondaria Superiore. Equivalent foreign qualifications may also be accepted. Admission to individual degree courses may be subject to specific requirements. First degree courses last for three years. The Laurea-L (first degree) is awarded to undergraduates who have obtained 180 credits. (from: <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/italco.htm>).

## A Few Words of Advice

As appears to be characteristic of the Italian university system, inefficiency and disorganization reign, despite the **valiant efforts** of the program coordinators. Don't expect things to work the way they do in Guelph. Try not to stress out over courses and don't take any of it too seriously. It is not unusual to find that a course you have been in for 6 weeks one day evaporates never to be seen again; to have room mix-ups; prof. mix-ups; class mix-ups.... CHECK BULLETIN BOARDS AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. The only notification you will ever get regarding exams, room changes etc. will be postings on the bulletin boards. Don't expect anyone to tell you anything! You will have to sign up for exams in October. Classes often have 100% finals, sometimes as orals. Ask what efforts are made for foreign students. Lectures are usually 2-3 hours long. Be prepared to stay awake and tuned in. Reading the material

before the lecture will make your life easier! Be prepared to have notes with many words missing. Many profs dictate notes... although commerce classes tend to have slides. Good excuse to talk to other students and ask to borrow their notes!

## **Marks**

Marks in Italian Universities are out of 30. An 18 is a pass in a course and anything above 23 is seen as very good. The highest mark you can obtain is a 30 e lode which is basically perfect with honours, this mark is very rare within universities and it means that you have gone above and beyond.

Don't convert your marks into percentages, you'll just get depressed. Remember that everything is supposed to be different.

## **Class Etiquette**

Don't eat or drink in lectures, it's considered very rude. Although having an entire conversation about your ski weekend doesn't seem to be frowned upon at all!! Let the prof be your guide, if the prof has a coffee or water, it may be OK for you to have one too.

Italian students, especially girls, dress for class a little more than we do at home. Don't plan on wearing sweat pants, sweatshirts, shorts, etc unless you want to stand out. Don't wear baseball caps, or any hats at all, especially for girls – they'll think you're an American. In lectures, questions aren't asked. This is the prof's time. "Seminaire" does not mean seminar as we understand it.

Books can often be borrowed second hand. Finding an advanced Italian student to lend you notes is great! No students bring laptops to lectures, all students hand write their notes. They are very particular about underlining!

For some readings they will be posted on an online site that you will get the password from your coordinator when you arrive. Many are in pdf format but some you cannot print off the site. Often on these sites is the course outline which you will need a copy of to take back to your professors in Canada. It also often includes a book list. You will need to purchase the books yourself either from the bookstore, second-hand or from an online bookseller. Always ask your professor as a foreign student what books he/she would like you to read as a non-native speaker.

Beware! You will have to stand in line for hours on end only to find out you are in the wrong line! This is part of studying in Italy. There will be endless amounts of seemingly useless paperwork to fill out. Make 5 photocopies of every important

piece of paper you own; everyone will want one! Another possibility would be to scan your documents and keep electronic copies. Do not *expect* anyone to know anything. Keep asking until you receive an answer that you are satisfied with. And last but not least...the rules can change! Bring *every* document you think you may possibly need (you can easily find photocopiers there, and save carrying all that paper). Write down your questions so you don't get frazzled and forget!

**Applying for a Permit of Stay** [if you are not staying in Italy for more than a year a permesso di soggiorno is fine]

Obtaining your permit to stay doesn't constitute residence. To obtain registration as a resident ( *residenza anagrafica*) you must apply to the registry office ( *ufficio anagrafe*) at your local town hall ( *comune*). All foreigners ( *extracomunitari*) planning to remain in Italy for longer than 90 days must apply for a 'permit to stay' ( *permesso di soggiorno* or *carta di soggiorno*) at the local police headquarters ( *questura*) within eight days of their arrival.

A permit to stay isn't a residence permit, which must be applied for after you have your permit to stay, if you wish to become a formal resident. It can take up to three months to obtain a permit, which can be issued only for the purpose stated on your visa. **Permesso di soggiorno per studio** – for students.

Non-EU nationals wishing to study in Italy must prove that they're enrolled (or have been accepted) at an approved educational establishment for the principal purpose of following a course of education or vocational training. You must also prove that you're covered by health insurance and provide a declaration in writing that you have sufficient resources to pay for your studies and for living expenses for yourself and any members of your family accompanying you.

Foreign students wishing to attend university in Italy should apply to the Italian consulate in their country of residence. They will send you a list of the documents required. Once you apply you will receive a **student visa**. You must present these documents to the police headquarters within eight days of arriving in Italy in order to obtain a student's permit to stay ( *permesso di soggiorno per studio*) which is valid for a maximum of one year only.

### **Applying for a Residence Permit**

To obtain a residence permit ( *certificato di residenza*) you require a 'suitable' address. Although all addresses are potentially suitable for residence, some rental contracts forbid you to use an apartment's address for this purpose. Such rental contracts are mainly used with foreigners, so that landlords can regain possession of their property more easily should they wish to do so.

To apply for a residence permit you require the following documents:

1. A valid passport;
2. A valid permit to stay;
3. A completed declaration of residence ( *dichiarazione di residenza*) form, which is available from your town hall ( *comune*);
4. A consular declaration ( *dichiarazione consolare*) from your country's consulate in Italy containing your name and surname, father's name, mother's name, place and date of birth, civil status (with name of spouse if married), along with the date and place of the wedding, or the date of your spouse's death if you're a widow(er), nationality, and details of other members of your family.

Once your application has been received, you're given a certificate stating that you've applied, which is valid for three months and can be renewed if necessary. A decision on whether to grant your first residence permit must be taken within six months of your application. A city police officer ( *vigile urbano*) will visit the address that you've given as your habitual residence ( *dimora abituale*) to ensure that you actually live there. When your permit has been granted you receive a notification that it's ready for collection from the ufficio anagrafe.

Student's permit is valid for one year only but is renewable. If you change residence within Italy, you must declare it at the police headquarters of your new residence within 15 days of moving home. Your new address is entered on your residence permit.

Despite the hassles, having the right of residence ( *il diritto di soggiorno*) entitles you to ship your personal effects from abroad without paying duty or VAT, buy land or property, buy and register a car, open a resident bank account, apply for an Italian driving licence, obtain an identity card ( *carta di identità*), obtain health care from the local health authority, and send your children to a state school. When you've been granted resident status, you're entitled to most of the rights and privileges accorded to Italian citizens, apart from the right to vote in Italian parliamentary elections.

For anyone planning to stay in Italy for more than a few months, applying for residence is likely to be **highly desirable**. Unlike most other EU countries, anyone staying in Italy for longer than 183 days per year isn't legally required to apply for residence.

(This information was taken from

<http://www.justlanded.com/english/Italy/Italy-Guide/Visas-Permits/Permits-To-Stay> )

**This list should give you an idea what Italian officials will often require.**

- Your passport and a photocopy of its main page, and the page with the student visa from Toronto
- Photobooth size identity photos or a smaller size (the same size you need for your visa).
- Photocopy of your Italian student card, inscription receipt and/or letter of admission
- Permit of stay ( permesso di soggiorno)
- Residence permit(certificato di residenza) if aquired
- A photocopy of your long form birth certificate
- Proof of financial means (bank balance in Italy, etc).
- Always bring some cash in case there are taxes for fees you have to play on the spot

**Aide Personnalisée au Logement**

The French government will give all students a partial reimbursement of rent money, generally 40%, which is retroactive to your first payment (or sometimes limited to three months before the application). For example, one student in 2007 in Lyon was reimbursed 150 euros on 345 euros rent as of the second month in her apartment. The amount you are reimbursed depends on marital status, dependent children, number of residents, number of square meters, fiscal earnings in the last year. The application process is relatively complex but definitely worth the effort. Pick up the application forms and list of required documents at the *Caisse d'allocations familiales* (CAFL) office or your landlord may provide them for you and you can do the application process through him/her. You must wait until you have the *carte de séjour* to apply but do all the other things while you are waiting. To apply for APL you will need:

- *Attestation d'hébergement* (a form from your landlord or the residence's *accueil* that proves you live there and states the cost of the rent)
- *A fiche d'état civil* from your local *mairie* (We didn't have to get this in Chambéry in 2007).
- Your official *carte de séjour* (you can't have the "in progress" sheet)
- *Relevé d'identité bancaire* (R.I.B). from the bank, which proves you have an account and provides the number for direct deposit
- A student card

It may take months to process, but then the retroactive pay will be deposited directly into

your account and you will receive the subsidy each month after that. If you go to the CAF office, they'll guide you through the application and print out all the forms you'll need signed.

-If there is something similar this in Italy feel free to add it



**Region: Friuli-Venezia Giulia**

**Province: Udine**

**Location:** Udine is in the north of Italy about 100km north- east of Venice and about 40 km North of Trieste Airport.

**What the guide books say:**

Udine is situated between the Gulf and the South-Eastern Alps, in the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Population was 94,600 in 2003. Udine was the historical starting-point for a route over the Saifnitz or Pontebba Pass to Villach by way of Pontebba and Tarvisio. It lays on the Roman route of the Via Julia Augusta, but there is no sign of Roman occupation. In the 1230s the seat of the patriarchate of Aquileia was transferred to Udine. That gave its Romanesque cathedral new prominence. The old residence of the patriarchs of Aquileia was erected by Giovanni Fontana in 1517 in place of the older one destroyed by an earthquake in 1511. Under the Austrians it was used as a prison. In the cathedral archives was formerly preserved a recast of the Visigothic code of laws in a manuscript known as the Codex Utinensis, which was fortunately printed before it was lost. Udine has a University. The archbishop's palace and the Museo Civico have paintings.

**STUDYING IN...**

The University of Udine (Italian Università degli Studi di Udine) was founded in 1978 as part of the reconstruction plan of Friuli after the earthquake in 1976. Its aim was to provide the Friulian community with an independent centre for advanced training in cultural and scientific studies and it's an important centre for the studies of Friulian language.

The University is actively involved in student and staff exchange projects with universities within the European Union, Australia and Canada. The university participates in many research projects at national and international level. The university itself is a bit smaller than Guelph.

The campus of the university is spread across the town center as well as outside the city. Classes are held in buildings according to the faculty that you are in. Each of these buildings often has a student library where you are able to study. When you arrive you will receive a form to register with these libraries and then you can go in freely and study. Just remember that your bags must be placed in the lockers while you are there.

**Courses**

Choosing courses will be explained to you by your course coordinator- they can often direct you to the good professors and access the lists of courses of-

ferred each semester. Remember when you arrive to contact them for a meeting as soon as possible.

Choosing your courses gives you a great opportunity since you do not register for the class until just before the exam. So it would be recommended to pick out a bunch of courses that you are interested and attend them the first few weeks. Do not take notes on the first week just sit taking it in and seeing which professor's accent you understand best. Later you can slowly par down your courses to what you wish to take. Once you have decided on a course it is good to introduce yourself to the professor as an exchange student and ask them what books you should be reading for the course. Most professors are very understanding of exchange students but not all of them are welcoming to foreigners. Italian professors are full on lecturers and it often connects to the books that you will be reading. There are no weekly reading assignments but it is good to slowly read the books at your own pace while taking a few notes from class.

When you visit the faculty secretary not long after you arrive you will need to go receive your ESSE3 password and marticola number[student number]. Once you get that she will give you a paper which you use to write down your courses. Do not fill out this document till a week before your first exam as you do not want to be registered for courses you are not taking in the end. You need to hand in this form at least 2 days before your first exam so the secretary can register it on the ESSE3 site. The ESSE3 is basically what webadvisor is for Guelph students, it allows you to look up exams, look at your marks and register for appelli[your exams]. Once you have handed in the course list you can go on the site and register for your exams in section titled appelli. You can view your marks on the section titled libretto. There is another website called materiale didattico where you can access course material and course outlines for this site you also use your ESSE3 password.

## **Marks**

Marks in Italian Universities are out of 30. A 18 is a pass in a course and anything above 23 is seen as very good. The highest mark you can obtain is a 30 e lode which is basically perfect with honours, this mark is very rare within universities and it means that you have gone above and beyond. Don't convert your marks into percentages, you'll just get depressed. Remember that everything is supposed to be different. There are appelli for all of the exams you will be taking and often there are about 3 appelli per year per course. If you fail the first time you are permitted to retake the exam with no penalty. This is also especially good since you are also able to take the second appelli even if you did not attend the first one, just in case of exam conflicts or travelling.

## **Arrival in .....**

Udine is located within 2 hours of three major airports, Trieste, Marco Polo and Treviso. The easiest and cheapest to fly to is often Marco Polo in Venice. If you arrive in Marco Polo I would suggest taking the ATVO coach bus. It can transport you to either Venice or to Mestre train station the cost is 3 euros. Make sure if you are trying to get to Udine that you are get the bus that is going to Mestre.

Mestre train station is one of the main train stations in the region of Veneto. Once you arrive in the train station you can go to the ticket office and purchase a ticket for Udine. There are two types of trains that go to Udine one says Udine and the other goes to Trieste(via Udine) the second is slightly faster but both will get to Udine. The train takes about an hour and a half and often most of the trains will announce the stops the stop before Udine is Codroipo so you will have about ten to fifteen minutes after that stop to get your bag organized.

## **Living in .....**

Udine is a city northeastern Italy, in the middle of Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, between the Adriatic sea and the Alps (Alpi Carniche), and close to the Slovenian border. Its population was is around 99,000. It is the capital of the region and has a long-standing rivalry with Trieste.

There are many nearby towns that are great for day trips. Udine has a vibrant small town centre with some amazing architecture. The Udine town centre is slightly like Guelph in that the streets are lined with shops and restaurants so there is a lot to choose from.

The city centre is extremely condensed but has a lot of nice area's there is the Castello which sits atop the hill and overlooks the city and a park called Primo Maggio. There is also Piazza della Libertà which is at the bottom of the Castello hill and is often lit up at night. A great place to enjoy the night air and sit and have a Spritz Aperol[a typical northern Italian drink] is Piazza san Giacomo. This piazza is lined with cafes, and the one with the green door to the north of the piazza is often the cheapest for drinks. There is also a café close to the international office called Poco di Buono. It is a really good cafe with friendly staff, crepes, toast, cappuccinos and free WiFi. There are many cafes around the city and you will end up sampling them all till you find your favourite.

The city places host to many tourists throughout the year most of them from Austria or other parts of Northern Italy. There is a famous festival in September called Friuli D.O.C. The entire city goes crazy celebrating Friulano culture and food. In April

there is also a very famous Far East Film Festival that you are able to attend and experience through some of the booths that are set up in the city centre.

### **Accommodation**

The University of Udine has a program for exchange students that places them in apartments with other students. You can apply for this when you get your information package from Udine. This option allows you to get a flat and immediately meet others who are in the same situation as you. Remember that if you have some sort of issue with the flat it can be addressed or you can always move and forfeit your deposit.

The general cost of a room in Udine is between 170 and 230 euros per month. You will most likely have to give your landlord a deposit that is either on month's rent or a month and a half. This is either taken off your last month's rent or it is given to you just before you leave. Most flats will have a bathroom with a washer in it, they do not have dryers in most places of Italy so you need to purchase a drying rack to dry your laundry. The kitchens will either have a cooktop and microwave or an oven. Do not buy many supplies till you see your apartment since many students leave behind plates cutlery and cooking supplies. Make sure nothing is broken in the flat or in your room, if it is inform you landlord promptly so you are not blamed for it. You will have keys for your apartment & bedroom which also open the garbage room & laundry room.

### In Private Lodgings

There are also many private rooms and apartments available. The majority are well priced and quite easy to find.

Boarding with a family can be an amazing opportunity to improve your language skills and become familiar with the Italian culture, but it also has its risks (namely that it cuts down on your freedom and independence significantly).

Some useful accommodation addresses:

### **Transportation**

The city centre is fairly small and Udine is only about the size of Guelph so the cheapest way is walking places. To walk to one end of the main city to the other is only about 30 minutes.

## **Shopping**

### Groceries-

There are a variety of different grocery shops around Udine some popular ones are Despar, Pam, and Coop. Most grocery stores are open from 8am to 130pm and 330pm to 730pm. It is best to find the one closest to you for shopping and later on you can find the one you like best for certain things.

### Markets-

There are sometimes markets in Piazza Erbe and other places around the city more so in the summer months. These consist of vegetables and fish and often have a fair price for most things. Bargaining is okay but it is often only really seen as okay in Udine if you are buying a lot of things together. Plus, if they realize you are a foreigner bargaining is much harder.

### For clothes shopping:

For shopping the town centre is expensive but there is a mall north of the city called Città Fierra that you can take bus number 9 to get to from the train station. This mall is much bigger than Stone Road Mall and offers a variety of shops and a large department store Iper. Iper is good for supplies for you apartment or for some basic groceries just remember you have to lug them back home.

## **Food and Drink**

### Restaurants-

Italian restaurants are quite expensive. There are often two courses in the meal the first consisting of typically pasta then the second course is often a plate of meat or fish. With two courses your meal will be between 18-25 euros. You can get pizza at most restaurants and the costs is only between 5 and 8 euro. You should also always remember that water is sold in bottles at restaurants and that there is often a copperta[service fee] between 1-2 euros per person.

There are a lot of small cafes that offer small sandwiches and paninis that are good for lunches and most cafes do not have copertas just a different fee for have a cappuccino at a table or at the bar.

A few suggestions:

### Restaurants

Vesuvio- near Primo Maggio

### Cafes and Bars

Poco di Buono- near the international office beside Euro pizza

Astoria- just down from the international office in the same building

Taverna del Angelo- just south of Piazza della Liberta if you turn right at the bookshop down the little alleyway.

Many of the cafe's in San Giacomo are very good also.

### Alcohol

The alcohol in Italy is much cheaper than it is in Canada. You can purchase a cheap box of wine for 60 cents in Italy compared to 9 dollars in Canada. Alcohol is sold at grocery shops and they have a variety of local wines and spirits. Friuli is very famous for its white wine so that is one of the cheapest drinks you can sample while you are out. There are also white and red wine spritz and then Spritz Aperol. Spritz Aperol is like an orange liqueur that you can get with ice, wine or prosecco and is very very popular in Udine.

If you are feeling a little like you are missing home a little the Black Stuff is a great place to go for a Guinness or a fosters. It is reasonably price and is a great atomsphere for watching some Italian or Champions League football. Another bar that many erasmus frequent is 3Jolie just down the street from Piazza della Liberta it has promotion nights and very cheap mixed drinks and shots. Overall though you will find that where ever you go with your friends it will soon become your favourite place.

## **Entertainment**

### Night Life

Udine comes to life in the evening time from about 7 to 9pm many people of varying ages are out having a glass of wine or a spritz. During the fall and winter there are a few discoteccs outside of the city that you can cab too but you can also go to bars all around the city centre. In the summer months the beaches open up and many people take buses to go down to Lignano or Grado. There at the beach there are a variety of clubs but you will need to find a place to stay for the night.

### Cultural Life

La Loggia del Lionello is an ancient lodge, completed in 1457, in Venetian Gothic style, despite the fire that destroyed in 1876, was rebuilt and today maintains its original shape. It is a beautiful building worth a visit.

Loggia e Tempietto di San Giovanni are located in Udine, and despite the existing problems during its building, it was completed in 1533.

The Castello in Udine, is an amazing site to see atop the hill over looking the city. There is an art museum inside the castello that is open frequently. In its interior there is an ancient hall of parliament, considered one of the oldest Europe.

The Cathedral of Udine also know as the Duomo, also known as the Cathedral of Santa Maria Maggiore, was built following the Franciscan model, in principle in honour of San Odorico and later, in 1335 it was dedicated to Santa Maria Maggiore

### **Additional remarks:**

Useful contacts:

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[Exchange in Udine,Italy from September 2010 to July 2011]