

Student guide to Rome

Before you go

So, you are going to study for a whole year abroad in one of the most beautiful places in the world, and although you would be right to be excited, there are some important things to think about before you embark on your travels.

Accommodation

This is very important, make sure you have your accommodation sorted before you go, the first few weeks will be challenging enough without you needing to worry about where you will be staying. Roma Tre doesn't have student accommodation, but you can talk to the Global Engagement team to help you find a suitable place to stay in the city. As a warning, be very careful on where you pick to live, look at the location in relation to the University for example and crucially if you will have access to the metro system as the buses are unpredictable and famously unreliable.

If, however you are not able to find yourself a place to stay, do not panic! There are plenty of well-priced hotels and Bed and Breakfast located throughout the city that you can stay in while you find yourself a more permanent place to stay. It is also worth looking at how much more you will be paying for a flat in comparison with a lower range hotel, as I know from experience that a few students stayed in very nice locations in hotels and paid less overall than I did on living expenses.

It is also important that once you have selected your accommodation to read the contract carefully. Do not pay anything without first making sure that you are not overpaying, or extra charges are going to be sprung on you at the end. For example, if you put down a deposit make sure you have in writing that they will return this to you at the end, from personal experience they will not remind you or take their own initiative to give it you back.

Money

I defiantly recommend you get an emergency European credit card, but your normal visa cards can be a bit hard to use in most places. It is very much a cash heavy country with few places excepting cards, so make sure to bring plenty of money with you, and when you do take money out take it in larger amounts, enough for a few weeks, to avoid being constantly hit by the exchange rates.

If you want to set up a bank account you can do so at most branches, however the English skills can make this hard, from my experience it was much easier to just convert money over in England and only take money out from my normal account when I needed to. If you do want to make an account you will also need to get yourself an Italian Tax code, a code fiscal, which is again very hard to get a hold of.

Immigration

Depending on how the negotiations go between England and the European Union this section may well need to be updated. Currently once you have your place at the university you do not need to concern yourself with much else in this area.

Tips

Make sure to print out all your forms beforehand, if you don't it can become very complicated in the first few weeks to use the printing shops. The university itself does not have printing and scanning facilities so you will need to use the two shops next door to it, don't use the red one as they overcharge none Italian students.

Remember to bring a memory stick, and adapters as these are easily overlooked amongst everything else you need to pack.

This next point may be true for all cities but it is worth mentioning, Rome is a medium sized capital with lots and lots of tourists and locals. This added with the fact that the driving style is a bit on the wild side can be a bit overwhelming at first, the best thing to do is go 'with the flow' so to speak, trying to fight it will only make you more stressed than you probably already are.

From personal experience make sure you have packed warm clothing and a water proof jacket of some sort. When it comes to accommodation they are built with the summers in mind making them very cold in the other months, it is not infrequent for them not to provide a quilt or pillows either so make sure to bring these with you. If you need to buy them you can find them in some supermarkets, there is also a IKEA just outside of the city centre that you can go to if you ride the A line to the end.

On the other hand, during the summer months Rome becomes very hot, remember to bring water with you were ever you go during the hotter months, there are taps all over the city to drink from as well that are perfectly safe. The University itself has amazing air conditioning that sometimes actually works a bit too well and you can find yourself freezing to death in shorts when its 40 degrees outside, so it might be worth bringing something to put on whilst in classes.

Your first few days after arriving

The first few days are by far the most stressful, after that you will quickly fall into the rhythm of the city, here is a few things that you should do:

Make sure you know how to get back home. Luckily it is true that all roads in Rome are straight and do usually lead back to the same place, but it is still worth orientating yourself with the city so you don't get lost. I found that if I could get to the metro and to the Colosseum from there I could work my way home.

Do not buy an Italian Sim card! This might seem counter intuitive, but they cost a lot of money and work on a pay as you go system and contracts are not available. You should defiantly increase your date usage from your existing provided and let them know that you are going to be abroad.

The same is true of your bank, if you are going to continue using your existing current account. Make sure they know you are away so they don't lock you card, trust me, the last thing you need is for your card not to work when you are stuck some were very far away from home.

Health Care

If you go to a hospital you can be seen, but these can be very slow and the English can be a bit off. Personally I got health insurance and went private and I used this doctors:

<https://www.doctorsinitaly.com//>.

They were very nice and it is easy to find because it is in the centre of the shopping area near the Spanish Steps.

Directions to Roma Tre

In terms of travelling between England and Rome, the cheapest way to travel is by Ryan air. This will take you to a secondary airport called Ciampino airport, from here you will need to get a taxi into the city.

You can also get a flight to Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino Airport, this is the major one. From here you can then get a train into Termini or Piramide, depending on where you are living, just remember to validate your train ticket!

Once you are there to get to the university there are several options:

Rome has two lines: Line A and Line B, the University is on the B line and you get off at either Garbatella or Basilica de St Palo. If you don't live near the metro and are on the other side of the river, you need to get the 23 bus. Remember that you need to get yourself a year or monthly travel card that you can get at news shops, the closest one to the university is just up the road, it looks like you can only get cigarettes from it but if you ask they will understand the monthly one costs 41 euros. If you can't find one of these in the first few weeks don't panic because you can just get single journey tickets from the machines in the stations that cost 1.50 euro each way. Not that we are encouraging this but most of the time you can also get away on the busses without having a ticket (they are not strict on that sort of thing).

The actual address of the university is: Via Ostiense, 159, 00154 Roma, Italy. For your enrolment, you go to the white building in the middle of the other two areas (it's not very easy to spot so make sure to have a good look).

Study at Roma Tre

You won't be able to use the university WiFi until you have been given your log in name and password that you get after enrolling, once you do get online it is a bit temperamental so it might be worth getting a bit more mobile data on your phone just in case.

Here is the link to the subjects, the only important things to note are that you should not do international arbitration as this was very poorly organised. Also, you will not be able to choose any of the seminars as these can't be translated back into English grades:

<http://internationalrelations.uniroma3.it/download/Law.pdf>

All the tutors are lovely and speak very good English and you won't have a problem with the work load even though you will be doing more subjects than most of the other Erasmus students. Most of the courses are broken into 3rds for your overall grade, one 3rd is in relation to attendance, the next for contributions in class and then the final one is your end exam.

For the exams, these can be varied, however the most common one is a short oral exam that usually last between 5 and 10 mins, in which you are asked a series of questions by your tutor which you are expected to be able to answer.

Language

The native language is Italian, but you will find that some people speak Roman which is a subset of the language. It is useful if you can speak a few basic lines in Italian before you go as their English skills vary vastly.

Night life

The night life is very different to England as the drinking culture is not at all as big as it is here, nor is clubbing. It is usually seen as an activity that single people do, so if you do go to clubs such as Shari Vari, be prepared that people will hit on you. Although the drinking culture isn't big, the smoking one is, be prepared that everyone will smoke and this can be done inside of bars as well.

All this aside the nights out in Rome are brilliant as there are lots of places to go and the city is open 24/7 with places to eat and drink. My personal recommendations are for the day time go to Villa Borghese gardens and have a Mojito (or 5) and read a book to relax in the sun, and then for any time of the day or night go to Trastevere or Monty for an explore and great food.

The university does have an ESN society that you can join, they arrange a lot of events and trips, but as a heads up everything in Rome has a 30mins variable on time. By this I mean if they say the event will start at 1 o'clock, it will most likely start at 1.30.

Finally

You are going to feel lonely in the first few weeks, the best thing to do is go out and see the sights and explore. You can also chat to people at home which is always nice in the evening if you are a bit homesick, but remember you will be home soon enough for your 4th year so don't let it spoil you time, go and have fun.