

Italy: A Guide for Students

by
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Student Travel in Italy

Focus On: Venice - Florence - Rimini

SLEEPING

EATING

HANGING OUT

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Introduction to Our Student Guide Series

Since this is the first in our series of student travel guides, we think it's only fair to admit to a few prejudices. We begin this series because we are dissatisfied with the traditional guidebooks which are chock-full of familiar "helpful hints" for student travelers.

We strongly believe that the best way to learn "how" to travel is to do it your own way and not to follow the opinions (and that's all they are) of travel writers. We saw too many people overseas treating guidebooks like Bibles, running around in neat little patterns visiting only the recommended student hotels and budget restaurants. If you follow the books exclusively you'll never make your own discoveries. You'll never have your trip!

We think the best advice is to keep your ears and eyes wide open when you are traveling. Be alert. Ask plenty of questions. Above all, do exactly what you want to do; if you wish to pass up viewing Michelangelo's David for sitting in the local cafe drinking beer and studying people, by all means, do it. You probably won't be sorry. Sights (statues, museums, etc.) are only a small part of foreign travel.

So if we're not going to tell you much about sights, hotels or restaurants, what are these student guides all about? We will try to bring you something different—our insights into the history and culture of the area as well as some off-beat ideas you won't find anyplace else. We'll let you know whether a visit to the local bureau is worth the walk. We'll tell you what it's like to study abroad. We'll give you some tips on the big four—sleeping, eating, hanging out, and seeing the sights. Tips that will make a difference. We'll focus on key cities and areas with first hand reportage whenever possible.

Needless to say, we will not tell you what to pack or whether or not to wear a bra or bring American-style toilet paper.

We hope you find our guides helpful in some small way. And we invite you to share your discoveries with us.

Italy, 1978. Incredible art treasures in Florence. Breathtaking beaches on the Riviera and Adriatic. Chic boutiques in Rome. Some of the best museums in the world, some of the nicest scenery we've ever seen.

But let's not forget the Red Brigade kneecapping wealthy industrialists in Milan. Or the thugs on motorbikes snatching pocketbooks in Naples. Or the slums and poverty in the South.

Italy is one amazing country—exciting, frustrating (sometimes), and, well, downright fascinating. Go to her!

BEFORE YOU GO

As always, we recommend you go as an informed traveler rather than a gaping tourist. A wealth of material exists on Italy, from the traditional guidebooks (worth a glance) to revealing history books, novels, and films. Check your university bookstore or local library. (And do it now, not after you've returned from Italy. We are reading a biography of Garibaldi, the Italian patriot, which we should have read before our research trip. As you can see, we don't always follow our own advice.)

If you're not into history or politics, try a book on Italian art or music. Or study an atlas so you know where you're going.

If you've got a 1,000-page tome to read for general psych or something and you don't want to hear about any more required reading, go to the movies and see some films by Italian directors. Art imitates life (or something like that) and the movies will give you a good picture of life in Italy.

Fellini's *Roma* is a great flic to see before visiting Italy. Also see his *Juliet of the Spirits* and *La Dolce Vita*. Films by Rossellini, De Sica, and Pasolini are also recommended.

And don't overlook TV—try to catch Sophia Loren on the 3 a.m. movie.

GETTING THERE

The cheapest fare to Italy in 1978-79 is the *budget fare* (book 21 days in advance and specify the week you wish to fly; the airline will then specify the exact date). Prices from New York to Rome are \$199 each way in the basic season and \$221 each way during the peak season. Seats are limited.

Apex fares (minimum stay 14 days, maximum stay 45 days, book 30 days in advance) will hover around \$450 for basic and \$550 in the summer for round trip New York-Rome flights. Add \$63 from Chicago and deduct \$5 from Boston. The LA-Rome round trip Apex fare is \$650. A 14-60 day *Excursion fare* with no advance purchase necessary will be in effect next summer with prices similar to the Apex fares. The 60-day maximum stay limit will be of special interest to students who wish a trip longer than the 45-day Apex limit.

Long-term charters to Italy will be hard to find this year. *Transitions* will supply you with names of reliable charter flight operators and flight dates on request.

From Northern Europe: For most of you, Italy will not be your only stop in Europe and therefore you will wish to take advantage of super-cheap discount fares into London (stand-by and budget fares/Laker Skytrain) or some new cheap fares into Amsterdam (\$260 round trip from New York). If you are then in a big hurry to get to Rome, a one-way student charter flight costs \$59 from Amsterdam and \$74 from London (off season). But why fly when you can take the train? It's a beautiful ride from the North of Europe to Italy, and your morning view of the Italian Alps is spectacular. In peak season it's best to make a seat reservation in second class. A *couchette* (sleeping rack) may be had for about 10 bucks extra but we like to stay awake and dream. You will too!

