

IU Florence Program Summer 2025

The perfect guide for your study abroad experience

[Florence-IU Web Flyer](#)

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If you find incorrect information, please contact edabroad@iu.edu.

Program Contacts

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Indiana University Summer Program in Florence

Plus Florence Hotel

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Goals & Objectives

The purpose of the Florence Program is to offer students the opportunity to study the art, history, politics, and literature of the Renaissance in the city where the Renaissance began. Students take language classes and cultural classes on Renaissance Florence. Students will be immersed for six weeks in one of the most spectacular artistic cities in the world, surrounded by medieval and renaissance masterpieces, as well as contemporary museums, art galleries, international music events, and culinary experiences.

The goal of the program is multifaceted. The program is conceived to introduce students to visual art, from the Renaissance to street art; Italian humanistic and scientific Culture (like the Galileo Galilei Museum; contemporary lifestyle and events (fashion, cuisine, sport, etc.), while also focusing upon Renaissance culture and art. Students will visit some of the most important museums of the world (The Uffizi Gallery, The Accademia, The Palatine Gallery...), artistic churches and historical palaces (Duomo, Croce, S. Maria Novella, Palazzo Vecchio, Palazzo Pitti...). They will also view Italian films, study language in specific cultural settings, make short videos about their experience, discuss current events and visit artisan shops and "botteghe." Cultural excursions to medieval and renaissance hill towns in central Italy (Pisa, Siena, San Gimignano) are an integral component of the program.

2025 Calendar

Please note that excursion dates may be changed. If so, you will be notified before end of the spring semester.

May 11	Arrival in Florence
May 12	Classes begin, 9am
May 16	Excursion to San Gimignano
May 23	Optional excursions in Florence
May 30	Optional excursions in Florence
June 6	Excursion to Pisa
June 13	Excursion to Siena
June 19	Finals (time varies by course)
June 20	Departure (last morning in Florence Plus)

Arrival in Florence

May 11th is the official date arrival in Florence and June 20th departure or end of IU program.

Florence has a small but active international airport (Amerigo Vespucci Airport) and you can fly directly there from a number of European cities (Paris, Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Frankfurt, etc.) and Italian cities (Rome, Milan, Naples...). Your exact itinerary will depend on the US airline you choose (for instance, Delta may fly through Paris; American through London or Madrid, etc.). Direct flights from the US (Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Newark...) to Italy are, usually, only to Rome or Milan. NB: The Florence, Milan and Rome airports have good public transport (train) from and to the airport.

If you land in **Florence**, you could take a cab from the Florence airport to the Plus Florence Hotel, which will cost about 40 euros, adding a tip of 10%. Taxis accept credit cards, but getting some cash from an ATM at the airport could be useful. However, at the Florence airport there is a convenient, inexpensive, and frequent city train (T2 – it leaves every 20 minutes) that takes you from the airport to Piazza Unita' (last stop), which is just beside the main train station (Santa Maria Novella), in about 30 minutes.

If you land in Milan:

If you land in **Milan Linate**: Take the bus shuttle (5 - 7 Euros) from the airport to Stazione Centrale and then a fast train to Florence (see the "Milan Malpensa" section for details about trains in Italy).

If you land in **Milan Malpensa** airport: Take the Malpensa Express train (about 14 euros) from the airport to Milan "Stazione Centrale," the main train station or to "Milano Cadorna" (secondary train station, but some fast trains leave from there as well) and take a fast train to Florence. There are two train companies: Trenitalia and Italo, and both have fast trains. Trenitalia's fastest trains are called "Freccie" or AV; Italo does not have specific names as it has only fast trains. Both have special discount and fares, according to routes, times, and ages of passengers. Trenitalia's "Intercity" trains also fast (they make a few extra stops) and cheaper (Rome-Florence with AV or Italo takes 1.5 hours, with Intercity 2h; Milan-Florence, with AV or Italo takes 2.5 h, with Intercity 3:15 h). Upon arrival at the Milan airport, after collecting luggage and passing custom, take these steps: 1) Proceed to the train terminal (Malpensa Express Train); 2) use a debit card to withdraw Euros at an ATM machine or use directly a credit card and buy a ticket at the ticket counters or at the automatic ticket kiosks (cash or credit card) from the Milan airport to the Milan train station; 3) you can also buy a train ticket for the Milan-Florence train there at the airport (strongly suggested, although in the Milan train station, you also have lots of ticket kiosks); 4) proceed to the train that will take you from the airport directly to the train stations in the center of town. We recommend that you not take a taxi into town unless you are sharing with another student, as the fare is expensive (80 euros) and traffic is usually bad.

If you land in **Rome**: At the Rome Fiumicino (FCO) airport look for the signs to the trains, reach the train platform (through escalators and moving walkway, approximately 5-6 minutes) and purchase a ticket at the ticket counters or at the automatic ticket kiosks (cash or credit card) for the train to Rome's central "Termini" station (which is the last stop on the local -45 minutes- or the only one on the "Leonardo express" -30 minutes). From Airport to Termini Station, there is a departure every 30 minutes, price 9-14 euros). At Stazione Termini or, even better, at the airport (counter or automatic kiosk), purchase a ticket for the less than two-hour train trip to Florence's main station, Santa Maria Novella (SMN).

NB: You can purchase the train tickets online before leaving, at <https://www.trenitalia.com/en.html> or <https://www.italotreno.it/en>. If you do so, calculate at least 1 hour to clear custom/ luggage collection, plus 1 hour to reach Rome's or Milan's train stations, adding 10-15 minutes to reach the correct track, etc. So, if landing at 10am, you could purchase a Rome-Florence or Milan-Florence train ticket for 1-1:30pm or later. Since things can always go wrong when traveling, buying a ticket in advance is both more convenient but also riskier. It may not be possible to get a reimbursement if you miss your train.

You could also land in **Pisa** Galileo Galilei International Airport, which is 1.15 hour away from Florence by train. At the Pisa international airport, take the train to Pisa Centrale and from there either a "Regionale veloce" or just "Regionale" to Florence SMN. It is very simple, and inexpensive (about 13-15 euros).

When you arrive at the Florence train station SMN, exit to the left of the train tracks, and then as soon as out veer right and look for the taxi stand. Plus Florence Hotel is about a 15-minute walk from the Plus Florence Hotel. If you have a good trolley or just a backpack it is not a difficult walk as it is all flat, but there are small sidewalks and some cobblestone pavement, or you can get a taxi at the station (about 15 euros). The station has a small square (Piazza della stazione) next to it. From the square you will see a street called Via Nazionale. Take it and walk on it. You'll soon see a large square on your left (Piazza dell'Indipendenza), so you'll know you are going in the correct direction. After the square, the street changes name ("Via Santa Caterina D'Alessandria"), but you don't have to worry about it, because it continues straight, and you keep going on it. You will see Hotel Plus on your left soon after the large Piazza dell'Indipendenza.

Academic Program

In the Florence program you will earn a total of six Indiana University credit hours by completing two of the following courses.

Italian Language Courses All language courses are taught in Italian. • M100 Elementary Italian I, 3 credits • M150 Elementary Italian II, 3 credits • M200 Intermediate Italian I, 3 credits • M250 Intermediate Italian II, 3 credits • M300/301 Italian Conversation, 3 credits

Required texts: • M100/150/200/250: Sentieri, Vista Higher Learning 2nd edition (ISBN: 9781-62680-803-4 or 978-1-62680-775-4). Package Components: Supersite Plus Code (w/WebSam + vText) • Each course will also include a variety of readings from various rhetorical and stylistic genres, provided in Canvas or in a course packet that will be provided to you in Florence. • All language students should bring an Italian-English dictionary.

Note: You may take only one of the language courses above. All Italian language texts are available only at the IU Memorial Union Bookstore.

M234 Renaissance Florence

Prof. Marco Arnaudo, 3 credits

This course is designed to explore the main aspects of Renaissance civilization, with a major emphasis on the artistic, political, and literary developments, in Florence from the 1300s to the 1600s. We will look at the political and social circumstances that turned a small and secondary city into a major financial and cultural center. We will read selected works by writers, poets, and philosophers of the time to get an understanding of the mindset that led to the creation of many artistic and architectural masterpieces. We will focus on: • The passage from Gothic Architecture to the new style that recovered and improved upon classical forms, culminating in the masterpiece of engineering that is Brunelleschi's dome. (gives birth again = renaissance) through Brunelleschi's and Alberti's ideas.

- The development of mural and table painting from Giotto to Ghirlandaio, Botticelli and

Classes will be mostly taught in part at the hotel and in part in museums, churches, and cultural sites. Our classes at the hotel will include discussions of relevant texts and images and interactive activities, including pedagogical games. The visits during the out-of-town excursions, although not part of the syllabus, will be considered a part of M234, as sites are chosen for their relation to the Florentine artistic developments. Optional visits and excursions will be offered by the professor on some of the Fridays when we don't have an out-of-town excursion.

Required texts: Paula K. Lazrus, Building the Italian Renaissance: Brunelleschi's Dome and the Florence Cathedral.

The other readings and videos will be made available either as free online sources or handouts provided by the professor.

Textbooks

Textbooks and readers for the language and culture courses should be purchased in the U.S. and taken with you to Italy. Language textbooks are available at the Indiana Memorial Union Bookstore. Ask at the information desk for Florence program texts; they will not be shelved under individual course numbers with summer session books.

Class Schedule

Classes are scheduled Monday through Thursday, between 9:00 a.m. and 7:20 p.m. There are no classes on the days of the excursions - an integral part of the program. The Italian language classes meet daily and Renaissance Florence schedule vary from day to day. This schedule may look a little chaotic at first, but it allows the program to accommodate shifts in museum open hours and the blocks of time that classes require for travel to churches and outlying towns.

Raphael, all the way until Renaissance painting morphed into Mannerism and Baroque

- Sculpture, mostly by Ghiberti, Donatello and Michelangelo.

Depending upon the final course enrollment, the schedule may be adjusted on arrival in Florence.

The classes are held either in the hotel or in classrooms at a nearby institute. The environment is relaxed, but the academic program is rigorous; you are expected to be on time and with all assignments completed. Renaissance Florence classes are mobile, and on some days they require that the group reaches the sites and museums in a timely manner (most of them are within a 15-20 minute walk from Hotel).

Schedule of classes may change according to museum bookings, etc.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00-10:30	M100 M150	M100 M150	M100 M150	M100 M150
10:45-12:15	M234	M234	M234	M234
12:45-2:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2:30-4:00	M200 M250 M300	M200 M250 M300	M200 M250 M300	M200 M250 M300
7:30	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper

Excursions

The excursions are one of the most popular features of the Florence program. Attendance during out-of-town excursions is required. Excursions begin early morning and last the entire day. We travel by bus or by train to interesting towns and cities in the Tuscan countryside, such as Siena, San Gimignano, Arezzo, Pisa, or various Medici villas. The exact destination of each year's excursions is determined by available accommodations at the time. The hotel provides lunches and water, and the program covers all fees and museum entrances. There will also be optional walking excursions around Florence, designed so that you can visit places you may not otherwise see.

Housing

Plus Hotel is a large Hotel run by a Coop. Personnel speaks English and the Italian AI will be housed with you. Undergraduate students will share triple rooms with bathrooms. Every effort will be made to accommodate your roommate preferences. Living in large Hotel with several dining areas, terraces, common spaces, has both advantages and disadvantages. Please remember that there are other students or customers who may not appreciate door slamming at night or people speaking aloud on their phone in the corridors or common spaces at night. One purpose of the Summer Program in Florence is to teach you to understand, appreciate, and tolerate different customs and ways of life. You must be willing to live and work with a group of students for six weeks in a spirit of cooperation.

There are some washing machines in the Hotel and there are laundromats located near the hotel.

Professor Arnaudo and an associate instructor will reside at the hotel and will be on hand to help with problems. Your housing arrangements with the hotel (room plus breakfast and supper on weekdays) begin with the evening arrival on Sunday, May 11, and end with breakfast on the morning of Friday, June 20; unless you make previous arrangements with them directly to extend your stay there. However, the hotel will likely charge you a higher rate than the special group rate.

For security's sake, and to obey the Italian laws, hotel rooms are not available for program visitors during the program. Guests may enter only after the staff on duty is notified.

Visits from Family and Friends

Encourage family and friends to visit you only after the program had ended in June so that they do not interrupt classes, excursions, and trips associated with the academic program. For security's sake and legal reasons, the hotel rooms are not available for visitors during the program. Family members may enter only after the owner or staff on duty is notified and they cannot stay overnight in the Hotel.

Meals

Your housing fees cover a robust breakfast and a supper Monday to Friday; there is a large cafeteria, and we will have our own tables. Suggested dinner time is at 7:30-45 p.m. and we will confirm once we arrive in Florence, as there are classes until 7:00pm. It is the standard custom in all hotels in Italy to charge separately for drinks at meals. Tap water is available at no additional charge. You must purchase extra beverages and additional mineral water directly from the hotel, both at meals and during the rest of the day. IU rules apply to any program abroad, and **if you purchase any alcohol, you cannot consume it in the room.**

You will arrange your own daily lunches and weekend meals. Most students prefer to eat light lunches, and street food is a specialty in Italy and in Florence. Sandwiches, snacks, and pizza are sold at every bar in Italy, and there is one a couple of minutes from anywhere.

Students who are vegetarians or vegans, or who have special dietary concerns will be accommodated easily, as the cafeteria offers a broad variety of food. It is preferable to know as soon as possible if you have special needs or if there is any particular food that you must have on a regular basis or avoid. There are plenty of health food stores in Florence with the same kinds of foods that one finds in American health food stores, and Italian supermarkets and grocery have specialty foods.

Medical Care

Program staff will help you find Italian physicians if needed (most of whom speak English). If you have medical problems, you will be in good hands. There is a clinic about 15 minutes from the Hotel, as well as a major Hospital. An English doctor, Dr. Stephen Kerr, has his office at Piazza Mercato Nuovo 1. His website is www.dr-kerr.comLinks to an external site., his e-mail is kerr@iol.it and he accepts credit cards. You can also WhatsApp or message him at +39 335 836 1682.

If you need a doctor for a sudden emergency -- ask the Hotel personnel to call an ambulance or do it yourself dialing 112. Please first talk to Prof. Arnaudo or the AI.

This is a program where we visit closed spaces almost every day, so if you feel sick (coughing, sneezing...) it is important that you avoid contact with the others. Skipped classes and visits for illness will be excused and you can make them up by completing different tasks.

Money & Banking

The European Union monetary unit is the Euro (€), A Euro is divided into 100 cents. There are eight types of Euro coins: 2 and 1 Euros, then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents. Each Euro coin has a common European face and a face designed by each monetary member state. All coins can be used in every monetary member country (Switzerland, often visited by IU students in Italy, does not belong to the EU). There are seven Euro notes that are differently sized and colored, and come in denominations of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. All European countries accept credit cards, so no need to go around with too much cash (perhaps for cabs, coffees, small meals...).

Telephones, Email & WiFi

Telephones

Prepaid cell phones can be rented, and they are not expensive (approx. €15-20 month). Some students purchase them and use them throughout Europe. Many American cell phones will work, but the calls are more expensive, unless you make special agreements with your phone provider. There is Internet in the Hotel, as well as in most cafes, and in many other areas in Florence, so WhatsApp is the way to go if you do not need to make regular phone calls. Many students purchase a new SIM card when arriving in Florence. In this way they can keep their cell phone and pay for calls at the local rate. For iPhones you may want to plan with your provider before leaving and ask for special travel rates.

Florence is six hours ahead of Eastern daylight time, so unless there is a genuine emergency, calls from home should keep this in consideration, as you may disturb your roommates.

Mail

Air mail letters normally take about one week to reach Florence from the United States. Do not plan to receive money from home by mail. It is forbidden by the law in Italy to send cash through the mail.

Weather

In general, May in Florence is characterized by moderate temperatures and occasional rain. Temperature in May can go from 80 in the early afternoon and 50ish in early morning. June is more consistent and can be hot, although normally not before the very end of the program. If you need shelter from sunlight and hot weather, use a trick known to the locals and look for a church. No, really: the entrance is free to anyone, and the temperature is always cool in there.

The early summer weather is as unpredictable in Florence as it is in Bloomington, so bring clothing you can wear in layers when the weather is cool and peel off a layer at a time as the weather warms up. During the excursions, we will go to some hill towns and in the evening, it will be chilly, so bring a sweater and a rain/wind proof jacket. The uncomfortable hot summer weather usually does not begin until July. There is air conditioning at the hotel, but you should plan to use it only when necessary, as it cools off considerably at night, and opening the window, in May, is almost certainly better. Please turn off your AC if you leave your room for a while.

Safety in Florence

The U.S. Embassy in Rome reports that American visitors are generally safe in Italy and are not singled out or targeted based on nationality, but rather for looking like a tourist. Americans tend not to experience crime in any large numbers and are safer from violent crime in Italy than in most large American cities. This does not mean that people and visitors are immune from crime. Most of the crimes committed against American tourists and visitors fall in the category of petty theft, such as pick pocketing and purse snatching. Only a handful of reports of violent crime were received in the past years.

General advice from the U.S. Embassy for safeguarding valuables is as follows: • **While on Foot:** Be cognizant of your surroundings. Know where you need to go and walk with a purpose. Do not give the impression that you are off balance in your walking style or appear to be lost or wandering. There is evidence that criminals will observe these vulnerabilities and target these types of individuals. Also, do not walk close to the street or too close to the buildings. Care should be given to walk, as much as possible, in the middle of the sidewalk. Whenever possible, walk against the traffic. If you are wearing an earbud, make sure that the volume is low enough to hear everything around you.

• **Public Transportation:** Be attentive to your surroundings and keep control of your personal items. While waiting in line, keep your luggage close to your person, or put the luggage straps through your arm or one of your legs to keep control of your personal belongings. All authorized taxis are yellow or white and have meters - take only these taxis or Uber. Do not use a private or unlicensed car service. Licensed cab drivers will not solicit a ride; do not accept a ride from someone who actively tries to convince you to get a ride with them.

It is recommended that travelers review the U.S. Embassy website for all updated and special information.

Eurail Pass

Traveling by train is a popular way to see Europe. In most countries the trains are comfortable, and they go nearly everywhere. If most of your summer travel will be within Italy, an Italian rail pass or individual rail tickets may be most economical. If you have ambitious plans for travel outside Italy after the program ends, one of the well-known Eurail passes may be worth the investment. They offer unlimited travel in Western Europe (except Britain and Northern Ireland) for fixed periods of time. There are several Eurail options; check with your travel agent to find the one that best suits your travel plans. All Eurail passes must be purchased in the United States. Read carefully the booklet that accompanies your rail pass so that you understand how to use it correctly.

The fast trains in Italy, called "Eurostars" (Freccia Rossa/ Argento) by "Trenitalia" ("Italo" has only fast trains) are more expensive but very convenient; the Trenitalia "intercity" trains are also fast, although they stop more frequently. Regional trains are good to go around Tuscany, but not for greater distances, as they stop in most towns. The Rome-Florence fast train takes an hour and a half; the intercity takes two hours. On major distances, the time saved is more significant (Florence -Venice is 1 hour faster by fast train, Rome -Milan 1hour and 30 minutes).

Packing

Pack light. Bring a versatile, mix and match clothing that minimizes care and weight. Emphasize comfortable (but not sloppy) clothing you can wear repeatedly. Take no more luggage than you can easily carry by yourself. Save space in your suitcase to take gifts and souvenirs home. All bedding is provided by the hotel.

Take with you:

- Cotton sweater or sweatshirt
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Windbreaker or light rain coat
- Umbrella
- Slacks, jeans, skirts (at least one long), blouses, shorts (primarily for hotel and beaches)
- Clothes that cover your shoulders and thighs for when we visit churches.
- Several nice outfits (Florentines dress well)
- Bathing suit
- Shower shoes
- Cosmetics, shampoo, antiperspirant (all available but possibly more expensive there)
- Vitamins, aspirin, cold/flu remedies (again, they can be expensive in Italy)
- Electrical converters for charging phone and laptop
- First aid kit, insect repellent, sunscreen
- Backpack or small bag for weekend travel
- Towel, washcloth
- Money belt or neck purse
- Travel alarm clock
- Address book, diary, photo of family and friends

If you take any kind of medication or vitamin supplement, bring an adequate supply. Almost everything that you can buy in the US is available in Italy, but you do not want to waste the time and money required in obtaining a new prescription. Over-the-counter remedies and contact lens supplies are readily available in Italy. Best prices for cosmetics and personal items are found at large stores called Upim or Standa.

Because of differences in voltage, current and plugs, most U.S. electrical appliances do not work well in Italy. Plan to purchase an inexpensive hair dryer in Florence if you need one.

Pre-departure Reading

Read / watch videos as widely as possible about Italy. Your visit will be greatly enhanced if you know something about Italian history, culture, and art. A good guidebook will also give you tips about Italian social customs and polite behavior as well as practical advice about electrical current, weather, getting around the country, changing money and packing. Read also about the cities where the group will go on Friday excursions. They are small places, but treasures of history and art. Arrange with a friend to purchase different books and share the information.