

# Florence 2018 Pre-Departure Information

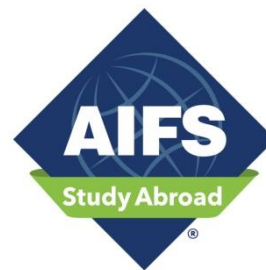
**AIFS**

Study Abroad



# Introduction

Thank You for signing up to study abroad with the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS). Your upcoming study abroad experience may well change your life. It will certainly change your perceptions and lead you to new thoughts and directions.



As you prepare to leave the U.S., take some time to consider your plans and expectations. It is interesting and fun to compare them before your departure and after your return. Many come true. Others are tempered by the reality of your experience abroad. Flexibility in attitudes and expectations will enhance your ability to enjoy a new culture and to experience another country's lifestyle. Try to be open-minded and don't compare everything to what you are accustomed at home. Sure, life may seem less luxurious and comfortable, but there are many other things to compensate for this.

What you get from your time abroad will depend on how much effort you put into breaking away from your American group and meeting new people in the communities you're visiting. AIFS will do everything it can to provide you with advice, information, resources and suggestions on how to do this. Make the most of this assistance and get out and see Florence.

You are sure to have many questions and concerns before the start of your program. You will be able to answer many of your own questions if you take the time to review this pre-departure handbook and do a little extra research before your departure. This will enable you to leave feeling more confident and prepared.

## Study Center Contact Details

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AIFS Study Abroad in Florence

Piazza dei Peruzzi 1

50122 Firenze

Italia

For non-urgent questions before and during the program please email: [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk)

Emergency contact for Florence

Dialing from a U.S phone: 011 39 340 836 5089

Dialing from an Italian phone: 340 836 5089

## Topics Covered

- Communication
- Money
- What to pack?
- Travel
- Safety and Security
- Embassy Registration
- Study Center Directions
- Get Connected / Useful Links



# AIFS Staff



AIFS staff members will be there to greet you upon arrival, provide an orientation, help you get settled in, answer your questions, give travel and sightseeing advice, offer support for homesickness and/or culture shock and generally help facilitate the program to make sure you have the best possible experience!

We can't wait to meet you for the start of an amazing program abroad! Since we'll be the ones guiding you along in your study abroad adventure, we thought we'd introduce ourselves so you can get to know us a little bit better...

## **Gerrard McAteer**

*Program Coordinator*

When he's not out running half-marathons or cycling through the Tuscan hillside on his lunch break, you'll find your program coordinator Gerrard McAteer spending his free time in the great outdoors going camping with his daughter. Originally from England, Ged has been working with international students for over 16 years.



## **Sophie Monkman**

*Academic Coordinator*

Our stylish academic coordinator Sophie Monkman spends her days behind the scenes making sure that each detail of your study abroad program is accounted for. Raised in Leeds, England, Sophie is a language graduate who has been working for AIFS for over 12 years.



## **Marta Crabbia**

*Senior Student Services Advisor*

Born and raised in the Veneto region of Northern Italy, senior student services advisor Marta Crabbia has been working with American students for 10 years helping them make the most of their time in Italy. After traveling throughout most of Europe and the USA, she has run programs for AIFS in Spain, France and Italy.



## **Gina Baxter**

*Student Services Advisor*

A California native and former AIFS student herself, Gina Baxter has been working with American students since 2010. She has also traveled extensively throughout Europe as a former tour manager and enjoys living *la bella vita* in Italy.



## **Trung Tran**

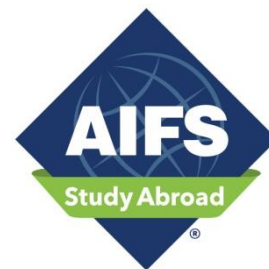
*Student Services Advisor*

Originally from Los Angeles, Trung is also a former AIFS student who has been working with international students since 2015. After living in Bologna for 5 years, he made the move to Florence and has now run AIFS programs in Rome, Greece & France. In his free time, he enjoys pursuing his other passion – Italian cooking.



# Communication

Keeping in touch with friends and family back home is very important but luckily it is easier than ever. While updating your Facebook status is nice, nothing beats getting a real letter in the mail! If you have any questions about any of this information, please email [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk).



## Internet Access

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We realize that the internet is the main way people keep in contact by using Email, Facebook, Twitter and Skype. As part of the program, your accommodation has wireless internet access free of charge. It is often slower/less reliable than in the USA and any illegal streaming/downloading will not be tolerated.

The Study Center in Italy has free WiFi access that students can use during office hours. Students can email documents to AIFS for printing. Many cafés and restaurants also have wifi. Normal practice is they will give you the password when you make a purchase.



## Your US Smartphone in Europe

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We've all become very attached to our smartphones. If you are planning on bringing your smartphone, please consider these points:



- Make sure it is insured. (Thieves like them).
- Contact your US phone service provider before departure. (Calls from Europe can be \$1 a minute)
- Check the prices and decide if you want a European data roaming package. (Can be \$25+ for a 100MB)
- Know how to turn off data roaming on your phone and use it with (free) available wifi networks only.

Students with smartphones have mainly used them with free WiFi networks only turning on data roaming when there was no other option or in times of need e.g. to look at maps.

## Italian Cell Phones

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Some students purchase an Italian cell phone on arrival in Italy. Most work on a pay-as-you-go basis with pre-paid minutes.

One big difference from the USA is that it does not cost anything to receive calls on an Italian cell phone in Italy. There is a charge to make local calls and you may find that cell-phone-to-cell-phone calls cost more than in the U.S. Calling the U.S. directly from an Italian cell phone will be expensive and is not recommended.

Prices vary but €30-€60 will get you a basic phone and SIM card with some phone call credit. More detailed information will be available upon arrival in Italy. A cell phone purchased in Italy can be used in other European countries however you will have to pay roaming charges. You will be required to show ID (passport) when purchasing a phone.

## European SIM Cards + US Cell Phones

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You can purchase an Italian SIM card to use in a US cell phone, provided that your phone is unlocked and compatible. Be advised that unlocking your US cell phone voids your warranty and providers will not give you a replacement phone in the event of loss, damage or theft.



A SIM card and a basic plan will cost between 10-15 Euros per month. The main providers (Vodafone, TIM and Wind) often have offers so please ask and check with AIFS Student Services before making your purchase.

## Internet-based Phone Services

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There are many different services available which allow you to use your laptop or smart phone to call other users for free. Skype  [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) allows you to create an account and add credit so you can call any number.

If you plan on using this method to keep in touch, we advise doing a test run before you depart for Europe. Don't forget the considerable time difference between the USA and Italy. Also, please call at sensible times as you will have roommates to consider.

For users of Apple products, [Facetime](#) is very popular, although the quality varies depending on your Internet connection.

## Telephones / Payphones

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If you are staying in an apartment, it is unlikely you will have a landline. For those of you staying in a home stay, in most cases you will be able to receive calls but please check with your host first and remember the time difference. We advise using WiFi based services for the majority of your communication.


Payphones do still exist and are operated by a pre-paid card that you insert into the phone.



They are normally used for emergencies only. The instructions for use are in English. All local calls in Italy cost money.

## Calling Cards

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This could be an AT&T ([www.att.com](http://www.att.com)) or MCI ([www.mci.com](http://www.mci.com)) card that you purchase in the U.S. or a pre-paid calling card that you buy in Italy. If you buy a calling card whilst in the U.S, make sure that you ask for one that allows you to call from outside the U.S. back to the U.S. and NOT one that allows you to call internationally from the U.S. 

## Mail

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In Italy your mailing address will be:

YOUR NAME  
AIFS  
Piazza dei Peruzzi 1  
50122 Firenze  
Italy



Regular mail to or from the U.S. takes at least one week but usually longer. On receiving a parcel in Italy you may have to pay a small fee (an Italian tax) for parcels sent from the U.S. Usually this applies if the stated value of the parcel is over \$50. If you wish to send important items, FedEx or UPS are safer / quicker and you can track the package. Mail should not be sent to student accommodation, use the address above.

Note to parents and friends: When sending care packages or parcels, state on the customs declaration that you are sending "**used personal items**" otherwise they may be held at Italian customs as if you were importing goods. If this happens there will be delays in delivery and often customs (import) fees to pay.

*Please do not send prescription drugs / vitamins / contact lenses / cosmetics / food or anything that could be mistaken for these items. They will be stopped at Italian customs, lots of paperwork will be requested and taxes may have to be paid.*

## AIFS Italy Study Center

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If dialing from the USA, please put 011 39 in front of these numbers.

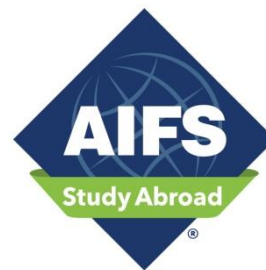
**Study Center Phone:** 055 2399 236

There is also a cell phone number to contact AIFS staff in Italy. For use in **emergencies only**:

**Emergency Cell:** 340 836 5089

# Money

During your studying abroad experience, it is an unavoidable fact that you will need access to funds. When paying for groceries at a supermarket you can use your debit/credit card. However, most places will insist on a minimum spend so we always advise students to have some cash with them at all times. Having your daily coffee and pastry for example can only be paid for in cash.



Withdrawing money from an ATM and where possible paying for goods by debit/credit card is the safest and simplest way to access money across Europe. If you have any questions, please email [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk).

## Getting access to cash – using an ATM

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The Italians refer to an ATM as a Bancomat. In almost all cases your US debit cards can access money from the ATMs of European banks.



Please pay attention to exchange rates and any out of network / overseas transaction fees your bank will charge in the U.S. These vary depending on your bank and can be an unwelcome surprise. If you make an ATM withdrawal overseas it is a good idea to check your statement online and see exactly how much it is costing you in U.S. dollars.

## Currency

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If possible you should get a little foreign currency prior to your departure from the U.S. particularly if you are not taking the AIFS group flight package. Having some Euros on you is handy for refreshments while traveling and if you arrive late at night. Try [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for current rates.

We advise not bringing lots of dollars with you as many banks will not change them and those that do tend to charge high commission rates. If family and friends want to give you money as a gift before departing tell them to place it directly into your bank account so you can access it through the ATM and not in dollars.

Coins are used more frequently in Europe and banknotes have different sizes and colors. It's worth taking a minute to familiarize yourself with the currency before arrival.



Please don't carry around large sums of cash. If it is lost or stolen there is no way to replace it and it is not covered by insurance.

## Travel Money Cards

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More and more popular as a back up to your regular bank account are pre-paid cards. Available in the U.S before departure, e.g. [Visa Travel](#)

[Money](#) or [Cash Passport](#), they work in the same way as regular debit/credit cards by using a pin number for withdrawals and transactions. They are a secure way of using money overseas and in the event that the pre-paid card is lost or stolen it can be replaced quickly.

## Credit Cards

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It is strongly recommended that you get a credit card if you do not already have one. Major credit cards, Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted in Europe.





American Express is less widely accepted. Please keep in mind that credit cards are not accepted everywhere. It is a good idea to check beforehand if a business accepts credit cards before making a purchase. Many places have a minimum spend if paying by credit card. Please also have some photo ID with you as well as it is normal to be asked for a “documento” at the time of payment.

## Banking

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Students will not be able to open bank accounts during their stay in Europe. Make sure you separate any joint checking / savings accounts you have before you leave the U.S. Such accounts do not exist in Europe and therefore ATMs cannot access your card details. You will only be able to access money from your checking account so please make sure that you transfer funds into this account.



**It is really important that you contact your bank and inform them that you will be overseas** – just in case they become concerned when they see purchases in Italy and wherever else you may be traveling.

Please keep your cards extra safe whilst in Europe. If they are lost it can be a complicated procedure to get them replaced. In most cases your bank will only send replacement cards to your American address, not your overseas address, so you could be left without cards for a while.

If your bank account has an online banking capability, it's a good idea to sign up for that service, so you can manage your money more effectively.

We suggest that you come to Italy with two debit cards from two different banks for emergencies. If one of your debit cards was ever stolen or lost it would be easier and more economical to transfer money from one bank account to the other one.

## Emergency Money Transfers

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The fastest way to get money transferred to you while you are abroad is through [Money Gram](#) or [Western Union-Money in Minutes](#). This can be done at any Western Union or Money Gram office or online with a credit or debit card. Please bear in mind that it is expensive to send money this way, so it should only really be used in emergency situations.

There is no charge to receive funds; all you need is some ID and the reference number (given to the sender of the money) to pick up the money anywhere in the world.



## Tipping

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Finally, let's talk tipping. As a rule we don't tip excessively in Europe. It's just a cultural difference.

Most people employed in the service industry are paid a reasonable wage therefore, Europeans only tip if they have received good service.

You are not expected to tip in bars or taxis in Italy.



The finer points of tipping will be discussed during your program orientation when you arrive in Italy.



# What to pack?

Deciding what to bring can be a difficult task. Past students nearly always find that they have brought more belongings than necessary. Pack light, it is much easier to get around. If you have any questions, please email [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk).



To help with your clothing choices, the statistics below show the average rainfall and temperature of Florence.

Florence	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall (Inches)	2.9	2.7	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.2	1.6	3	3.1	3.5	4.4	3.6
Min Temp (°F)	34	37	41	46	52	59	63	63	57	50	43	36
Max Temp (°F)	50	54	59	66	73	81	90	98	81	70	59	50

Italy can be chilly in the winter and hot in the summer. Scarves, hats and gloves come in handy in the Fall/Winter and early spring. It is unlikely that your accommodation will have air conditioning as it consumes a lot of electricity. The price of utilities is much higher compared to the USA.

There will be rain showers (the rainfall is fairly consistent all year), so come prepared. For the latest weather forecast in Italy, please check this website: [www.ilmeteo.it/pdf/meteo-firenze.pdf](http://www.ilmeteo.it/pdf/meteo-firenze.pdf)

Please keep in mind a few key points:

- You will have to carry your entire luggage yourself (Airport / Plane / Bus / Taxi / Stairs).
- Airplane luggage allowances are strict but reasonable. (One checked bag, maximum weight 50lbs / 23kgs and one carry on, maximum weight 17.6lbs / 8kgs is enough).
- It is highly likely your accommodation will not have an elevator. (Lots of stairs).
- Closet space will be limited and you may not have many clothes hangers.
- If you are traveling after the program, you will have to take your bags with you or store them.
- Don't forget if you buy souvenirs, they will take up space in your luggage on the return leg.

## Travel tips

It's a good idea to have a sturdy label on your luggage and attach something (sticker/belt) to identify it easily.



Occasionally checked bags do get delayed. It's a good idea to bring some spare socks/underwear and a few toiletries in your carry-on bag to get you through the first night in case of missing luggage.

Please make sure any liquids you are transporting are securely wrapped to prevent leaks in your luggage.

## Clothing

Bring some of your favorite, comfortable clothes that you know you will wear. There are stores in Europe, with clothes at reasonable prices and we've found most students want to buy at least one piece of clothing in Italy.



You will be living in the heart of a busy Italian city, not a college campus. Italians dress appropriately to the situation e.g. pajamas at home and bikinis on the



beach. One of the best ways to fit into your new surroundings is to think about what you are wearing. At all times of year when visiting churches you need to have your legs and shoulders covered.

#### **Do bring**

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- Clothing that you can layer. E.g. jeans, long and short-sleeved t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters etc.
- Comfortable socks and underwear. You may also want to bring some footwear to wear in the house.
- Shoes that keep your feet warm, dry and are good for doing lots of walking in. You will walk a lot.
- A coat that will keep you warm and dry whilst walking to school. Hat and gloves if coming in winter months.
- Sports shoes or sneakers in case you decide to take part in any sporting activities.

#### **Do not bring**

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- Too many dressy outfits, opportunities to wear them are usually limited. However, if you do like to go out in the evening, many clubs will only admit people who are suitably dressed (no sneakers and/or jeans).
- Clothing with special washing instructions (e.g. "dry clean only").
- Clothes you might wear. Only bring things you are sure to wear.

#### **Practical items**

##### **Do bring**

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- ATM and/or Credit Card. You will need access to funds and having more than one option is a good idea.
- Photocopy of your passport / credit card / driving license. (Just in case you misplace originals).
- Your laptop and/or iPad/tablet device. Don't forget the chargers.
- Towels (Only one bath towel and maybe a small hand towel, no more).
- Adapter for Italian outlets. US are flat with two flat prongs. Italian ones vary with rounded two or three pins.
- If you use prescription medicine please bring enough for the duration of the program.

- Camera and charger. You will be taking lots of pictures.
- Contact lens supplies; bring enough for the duration of the program. Don't forget your glasses as well.
- An alarm clock. Battery-powered or you can use your iPad/iPhone if you have one.
- A small selection of your favorite cosmetics – they may not be easy to replace abroad.
- A small selection of pain relievers and cold/cough medicines that you typically use, just in case.

##### **Do not bring**

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- Bed-linen or pillows - these are all provided.
- School supplies. Paper, folders etc, they can be purchased in Italy (paper sizes are different to the U.S.).
- Anything that will distress you if you lose it or it gets broken in transit.
- Hairdryers and straighteners - the electrical voltage is different, which prevents US hairdryers from working in Europe. Both are available relatively cheaply in Italy so you can share with your roommates.

Please ensure that you have adequate insurance for any personal effects such as digital cameras, laptops etc. that you may be considering bringing.

##### **Luggage allowance**

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Please check with your airline before you fly as luggage allowances vary. For example, [Lufthansa](#) allows you to have one checked piece of luggage, weighing no more than 23kg (50lbs) for free. If your bag weighs more than 23kg (50lbs) then you will be charged \$150.

You are also allowed one standard size carry-on and one small "accessory" (small purse/laptop bag/camera bag), so this should be plenty.

If this is not enough for you, you can pay extra to take a second bag. The current price with Lufthansa is approx. \$200.

# Traveling

During your Study Abroad Program you may have free weekends during which you can travel. To make the most of your opportunity, it is a good idea to do some research before the program starts. When you arrive, AIFS staff will give you plenty of advice and assistance. If you have a question, please email us at [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk).



## Air

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The two local airports are Florence (FLR) and Pisa (PSA) allowing you to get almost anywhere at reasonable prices. The key to getting cheap deals is being flexible about departure times and booking as early as possible.

**Vueling** ([www.vueling.com](http://www.vueling.com)) and **CityJet** ([www.cityjet.com](http://www.cityjet.com)) have good options from Florence airport (20mins from the center, accessible by bus or taxi) to Barcelona/Berlin/London/Paris

**Ryanair** ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) and **EasyJet** ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)) are two of the most popular cheap airlines that fly from Pisa airport (1hr away from Florence, easily accessible by bus or train).

**Skyscanner** ([www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)) is a handy website for checking out different flight options from various airports. When booking a budget airline, be aware:

1. The cheapest flight times are usually first thing in the morning or last thing at night when it can be expensive or inconvenient to get to the airport in time.
2. There are often extra charges for online check-in, checked baggage, early boarding, insurance, credit card processing fees etc. The cheap fare might not stay cheap for very long with all the extras.
3. Airports described as Paris (Beauvais) or Italy (Girona) for example, may not be that close to the city. (Beauvais is 90 minutes Paris; Girona is 1hr from Italy).

Make sure you do your research carefully before booking any flights. If in doubt, ask AIFS staff.

## Train

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Trains in Italy are comfortable, reliable and a great way to explore the country.



There are two different train companies in Italy; the state-run Trenitalia ([www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)) and the privately-owned Italo ([www.italotreno.it](http://www.italotreno.it)).

Both of the train websites have details and prices of trains (in English). There are a limited number of cheap tickets available for every route, so it pays to book in advance.

The main Florence train station is called Santa Maria Novella (often written Firenze SMN). If in doubt, please ask AIFS staff before booking.

Taking the train to other European countries can be slow and not so cheap but is more relaxed, with no luggage restrictions or excessive security. A good starting point for cross Europe travel is [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com).

A Eurail pass allows you so many days of train travel throughout certain countries.



Full details at [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com). Passes can only be delivered to a US address.

Think carefully before buying a multi-day pass, they are more suited for long term travel, not occasional weekend use. Even with a pass you are still required to pay a seat reservation fee on many trains.

## Bus

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Sometimes the cheapest way to get around Europe is by bus. Be warned that it will be a slow way to travel but you will get there, eventually... **Eurolines**

([www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com)) or **Flixbus** ([www.flixbus.com](http://www.flixbus.com))

Most buses have a bathroom, sometimes wifi and make regular stops. You also get to see some of the countryside en route.

## Car Rental

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Fancy driving yourself? Renting

a car in Europe is often more trouble than it's worth.

Normally you have to be over 25 years of age, the cars are

stick shift, parking is a nightmare, gas is \$8+ a gallon and there are plenty of traffic circles to negotiate! If you are really keen, talk to AIFS staff before booking.



## Where to stay?

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**Hostels** – Don't be afraid of staying in a hostel. Modern hostels are clean and comfortable and are great places for meeting people. Many hostels have the option of a private room with bathroom. Take a look at [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com) for more information and guest reviews of all places.

**Hotels** - There is a variety of hotels and guest houses across Europe. Rooms are much smaller than in the U.S, rarely have air conditioning and if they are booked for two people that are the maximum number allowed. Prices vary hugely depending on season. Be aware of Easter and local holidays that will push up prices. Often rooms will come with breakfast included. Check previous guest reviews on [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) and use an online map so you know exactly where it is located. Good places to start looking for hotels are [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and [www.trivago.com](http://www.trivago.com).

**Apartments** – When traveling, a private apartment could be an option, via [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com) or [www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com). Read previous reviews carefully.

## Student travel companies

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There are companies in Italy aimed solely at the student travel market. They arrange weekend tours that depart after class on Thursday (sometimes by bus or you buy your own flight) and return Sunday evening.

They can be a convenient way of traveling however, we advise you to consult with AIFS staff and ask the company plenty of detailed questions about what the itinerary includes and type of accommodation before booking.

[www.bus2alps.com](http://www.bus2alps.com)

[www.florenceforfun.org](http://www.florenceforfun.org)

[www.euroadventures.com](http://www.euroadventures.com)

## International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

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In order to prove you are a student whilst in Europe, it might be worth getting an International Student Identity Card. These are usually cheaper to purchase in Europe (€10) and are available from any branch of CTS, the Italian student travel company ([www.cts.it](http://www.cts.it)). The cards are recognized all across Europe, providing discounts at hostels, movie theatres, museum entrances etc. [www.isiccard.com](http://www.isiccard.com) / [www.isic.it](http://www.isic.it).



## Further research

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Take a look at the following resources. Don't forget most travel guides can be obtained in digital format and viewed on your laptop/tablet.

**Let's Go** Travel Guides. Written by students and updated each year: [www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com).

**Time Out**. Good city guides and you can get newsletters by email: [www.timeout.com](http://www.timeout.com).

**Lonely Planet**. Great travel guides and has a useful website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

**City Spy Maps/Guides**. An often funny, alternative spin on European cities: [www.thespymap.com](http://www.thespymap.com).



# Safety and Security

AIFS has been arranging study abroad for American students for over 50 years and we have had over 1.5 million participants on our programs. As you prepare for this exciting experience, we want you to know that our primary concern is student safety.



One of the most frequently asked questions from parents is “Is it safe to study abroad?” We hope the following will answer any questions you may have and help to reassure you that we take our responsibilities very seriously.

1. AIFS provides detailed security briefings to students on behavior, dress code and general awareness in their Study Abroad location. We do not display signs saying American or U.S. outside our student centers.
2. All students are asked to register with the American Embassy before they arrive (instructions are in this handbook). We also keep copies on file of passports and photo ID of all current students when they subsequently arrive.
3. AIFS has a 24/7 emergency number that students or their families can use to reach AIFS staff immediately in an emergency. If necessary, duty staff can reach senior AIFS staff instantly. AIFS has an incident response plan and all staff members are trained in how to handle any situation which may arise.
4. All students are given the number they need to call to reach the local emergency services (police, fire, ambulance), and are advised to call this immediately in the event of serious incident, illness or injury. We ask that they also immediately contact AIFS staff using our emergency procedures so that we can provide any additional assistance required. If a student needs to see a doctor or is hospitalized, AIFS staff will accompany/visit them and keep doing so until they are well.
5. We receive and monitor all U.S. State Department advisories and inform students of areas (if any) that are temporarily not recommended for visits by U.S. Citizens. Individuals can also look at State Department information on the web at this address: <http://travel.state.gov/>
6. We go to great lengths to be aware of the current whereabouts of all AIFS students. Of course, we know their addresses in their program location and our on-site staff is in close contact with them on a regular basis. We also require students to log their travel plans, addresses and contact details with us when travelling outside the city at weekends. We advise students to purchase inexpensive, personal cellular phones and we record their phone numbers so that we can contact them easily.
7. In the highly unlikely event of the U.S. State Department issuing a specific Travel Warning that U.S. Citizens in any AIFS study abroad city should return to the USA (this would be unprecedented), AIFS will suspend any currently operating program, fly the students home (with timing as appropriate to the situation) and rebate pro-rata program fees subject to the usual deductions outlined in our agreements.
8. AIFS medical insurance provides extensive coverage for students/schools who have taken it (see [http://www.aifspartnerships.com/pdf/insurance\\_summer.pdf](http://www.aifspartnerships.com/pdf/insurance_summer.pdf) for details). This includes a Team Assist plan which provides a worldwide 24-hour emergency telephone assistance service. Multilingual help and advice will be provided in the event of any emergency. Please check with your home university whether AIFS medical insurance has been included in your program fee.

During your Study Abroad Program you may have free weekends during which you can travel. To make the most of your opportunity, it is a good idea to do some research before the program starts. When you arrive, AIFS staff will give you plenty of advice and assistance. If you have a question, please email us at [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk).

# Embassy Registration

For security reasons AIFS strongly advises all its students to register with the U.S. State Department before leaving the U.S. We are unable to do this for you – you must do it individually on-line. You will need your passport information before you can do this.



Go to the following website: <https://step.state.gov/step/>



## Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

A SERVICE OF THE BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS  
U.S. Department of State



Sign In or [Create Account](#)



[Forgot Username](#) or [Password?](#)



### What is STEP?

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

### Benefits of Enrolling in STEP

- ✓ Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- ✓ Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- ✓ Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

### Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!

1. Click on Create Individual Account.
2. Fill out the password and security information – note this down and keep it somewhere safe. Fill out as many details as possible.
3. Add Passport information.
4. Add Emergency contact information – please enter as much information as possible to allow the State Department to contact your next of kin in the event of an emergency while you are abroad.

5. Add Privacy information – this is at your own discretion but it is advisable that you allow family members to have access to this information in the event of an emergency.
6. Confirm your account details and print for your records. This will now take you back to your Profile Information.
7. From here you should click on Add a Trip; this will take you to the Itinerary page.
8. Destination Info – please enter your first location as follows:

Country:	<b>Italy</b>
Local Embassy:	<b>Florence</b>
Type of Visit:	<b>Extended Stay</b>
Date of Arrival and Departure:	<b>Please enter the dates of your program</b>
Purpose of Visit:	<b>“Study Abroad” plus the name of your home college</b>

9. Address – please enter as follows:

Destination Type:	<b>School</b>
Address Line 1:	<b>Piazza dei Peruzzi 1</b>
Address Line 2:	
City:	<b>Florence</b>
Postal Code:	<b>50122</b>
Country:	<b>Italy</b>
Phone number:	<b>055 2399 236</b>

10. Travelers – please enter your own information. One form of contact information must be entered here – home address, telephone number, e mail address, fax number.
11. Email list – add your email address if you would like to be kept up to receive email Travel Warnings, Public Announcements and other information from the State Department. You will then see any relevant information recently issued about your destination country.
12. Finally you should confirm the summary of information. When you click on Finish it will take you back to the Profile page from where you can logout or add other trips, if necessary.



# Directions

The AIFS Study Center in Florence is located in the heart of the Santa Croce neighborhood, just minutes from the church where famous Italian figures such as Michelangelo and Galileo are buried.



Many different shops and services are available all within walking distance from the school, including a Supermarket, Bank, Post Office, Restaurants, Cafés and more.

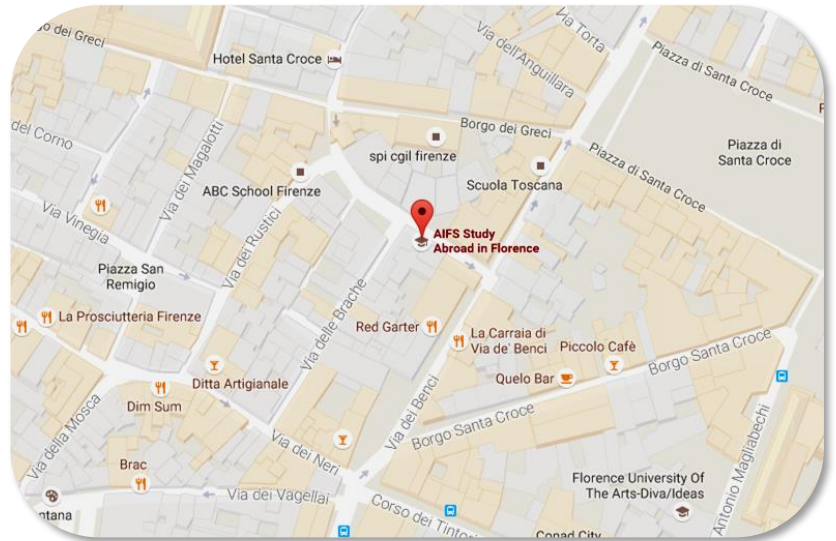
## Study Center Address

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AIFS Study Abroad in Florence  
Piazza dei Peruzzi 1  
50122 Firenze  
Italia



AIFS Study Center in Florence



Google Maps - AIFS Study Center

## Your Accommodation

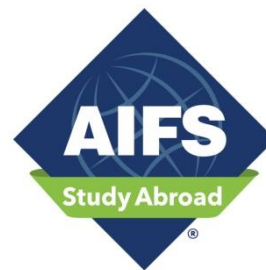
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You will be housed in apartments located throughout the historical city center, in buildings where real Italian families and other international students live. Each apartment is a maximum thirty minutes walk from the Study Center. Each apartment will have a self-service kitchen with pots & pans included, shared bedrooms (typically there are 2 people per bedroom, with 4-6 students sharing an apartment) and a common living area.

All AIFS apartments are equipped with WiFi and you will be provided with bed linens as well as adequate utilities during your stay. If you have any questions / roommate requests please email: [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk)

# Get Connected

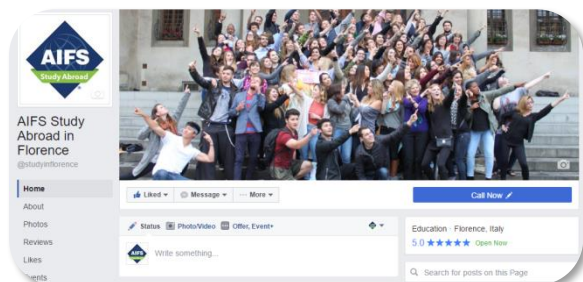
We hope you have found all this information useful? If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch or follow us on social media.



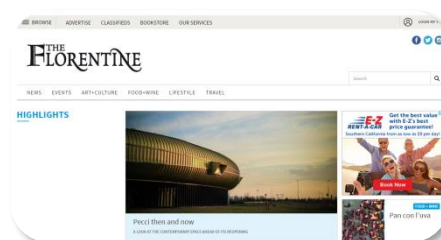
Please use the resources below to discover what is currently happening in Florence and on our other study abroad programs.

Email address: [florence@aifs.co.uk](mailto:florence@aifs.co.uk)

Social Media (FB, Instagram, Twitter): [@aifscustomized](#)



AIFS Study Abroad Florence Facebook



The Florentine English Newspaper



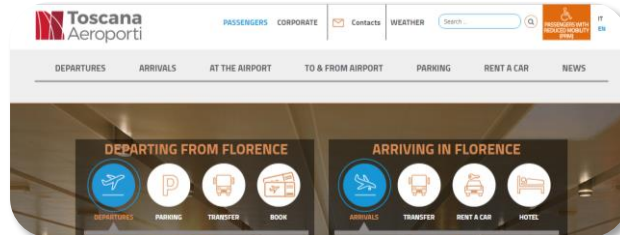
Florence Tourist Office



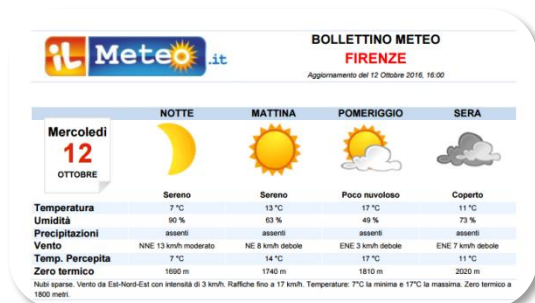
Fiorentina Soccer Club



AIFS Abroad Instagram



Florence Airport



Florence Weather



AIFS Abroad Twitter