
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER COLLEGE OF LAW
Italy Summer Program:
Sorrento



**PARTICIPANT PREPARATION
MANUAL**

THIS MANUAL CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT WILL AID YOU IN YOUR PREPARATION FOR THE ITALY PROGRAM. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE THE ONLY SOURCE YOU RELY ON.

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your acceptance into the University of Denver Sturm College of Law International & Comparative Law Program! Our program takes place in Sorrento Italy and we hope it will provide you with a variety of enriching academic and cultural experiences. This program includes international and comparative law courses, tours, and an introduction to Italian and European culture. It also provides a great opportunity to make lasting friendships.

If you have not traveled abroad before, you may not be familiar with the concept of “culture shock,” which is inherent in adjusting to a new country. This adjustment takes some time. While you will probably begin your trip with a great deal of enthusiasm, you may eventually feel homesick for American culture. It is important to remain open minded about the different values and customs that you will learn about Italy. It is critical to remember that you are a guest in a foreign country, and must obey local laws as well.

We hope this manual will help you before the trip as you make your plans and also during the trip as you make your adjustment to life in Italy. Please take the time to read through this manual very carefully and to prepare as thoroughly as possible for this trip. Please consider purchasing a recent travel book from Lonely Planet or another source for Italy and any other country you plan to visit!!

1. PASSPORTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

1.1 Passports

You need a passport to travel to Europe. If you have a passport, make sure it is still valid and will be so for **six months** after your return. **If your Passport is expired you will need to send it in and apply for a new one.** Non U.S. citizens need to check with their country’s embassy as to the procedures for replacing an expired passport.

U.S. Passports are valid for adults for 10 years. The Passport agency will return your old passport when they mail your new one. Please check with your local passport agency for qualifications. Passports can be obtained either through the mail or from a U.S. Passport Agency. The Post Office is the closest place to obtain a Passport. **Please check ASAP to determine how long it will take to get a new passport. Even expedited requests may take several weeks.**

Protect Your Passport At All Costs! Keep your passport with you at all times! Do not leave it in hotel rooms, etc. Wear it in a money belt inside your pants. However, you should be aware that some hotels may require the passport of one person staying in a room.

If your passport is lost or stolen, go to the nearest Embassy for your country or to local police authorities. If you can provide information that was contained on your passport, you may be able to obtain a new one. It is a good idea to make photocopies of your passport, birth certificate, and other important identification documents, and keep the copies separate from your passport. In fact, it is a good idea to leave a photocopy of the passport with a relative or friend in America.

For U.S. citizens, you can get additional information from the 24-hour phone number of the U.S. Passport Agency: (202) 647-0518. Toll free: 877-487-2778.

1.2 International Health Insurance and Student Identity Card

IMPORTANT: In accordance with university policy, university students going abroad through a University of Denver sponsored program must register with Passport, an on-line portal.

- All travelers must maintain personal health insurance that provides coverage while traveling internationally. Part of the travel registration process includes a certification by each traveler that health insurance will be in effect. Travelers should talk with their insurance provider to understand exactly what benefits they have and how they will work abroad. Click [here](#) for information and guidance to help participants find international health insurance coverage.
- Program directors, faculty, and staff should not evaluate the coverage travelers have in effect but leave this to the traveler's insurance carrier.
- The University's student health insurance policy may cover a student traveling internationally, but students must check with the Health and Counseling Center for specific details related to their travel destinations.
- All registered participants are covered under the University's International SOS evacuation and repatriation [policy](#).
- Please note that the plan with International SOS is not a health insurance or medical expense policy and is no substitute for a personal health insurance or medical expense policy. Travelers can also purchase add-on medical expense coverage through [International SOS](#) if they believe their personal health insurance is inadequate for international travel.

Students traveling abroad may also choose to apply for an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). These cards may provide you student discounts at some museums and other tourist attractions. A University of Denver or other university student ID may get you many of the same discounts, but the International Student Identity Card offers some exclusive discounts that might make it worth getting. There is no age limit to get a card and all that is required is that you are a full-time student. For more information about the International Student ID, visit the Office of International Programs.

If you decide to obtain a card, it sometimes takes as much as one month to process an order. They are also available through the following agencies:

Council Travel: 1-800-2council, www.counciltravel.com

Let's Go Travel: 877-370-ISIC or www.letsgo.com

1.3 International Youth Hostel Membership Card

If you plan on staying at youth hostels while abroad, you should be aware that some hostels require organization membership cards. Hostels that require these cards are often of higher quality than independent hostels, and there are a number of international hostel organizations, including Hostelling International and the International Youth Hostel Federation. More information on these organizations can be found at <http://www.hihostels.com/web/m-faq.en.htm> and <http://www.yha.org.hk/eng/channel.php?channel=hostelling-international>. You should research these and other options if you think you might utilize this service.

1.4 Student Visas

If you are a United States citizen, student visas are not required for participation in this program. However, if you choose to go to another country while you are in Italy, you may want to consider that particular country's visa requirements. EU countries will not require you to have a visa. However, some pending EU countries, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Asian and African countries may require a visa.

If you are NOT a U.S. citizen, you should talk with the Italian Embassy and the embassy of any other country you wish to visit regarding their visa requirements. **YOU MAY NEED TO APPLY MONTHS IN ADVANCE.**

2. FINANCE AND BUDGETING

2.1 Banking and Charge Cards

ATM/Debit and Credit Cards

If possible, students should bring both an ATM/debit card and a credit card. Most ATM cards will work in Italian ATM machines, and there are several machines in Sorrento. **ATM/debit and credit cards with the VISA (Carte Bleu) logo are most widely accepted in Italy. MasterCard and American Express are much less frequently accepted.** If you do not have a Visa Card, you would be wise to call the bank that issues your card and ask if they issue a VISA version of your card. If not, you should seriously consider applying for one! Also, credit and debit cards often get de-magnetized, so you might want to have a contingency plan.

Students should be aware of a difference in European and American cards. All European credit cards utilize a microchip technology is in the process of coming to the United. Americans carrying cards without the chip may encounter problems when making purchases abroad, especially at unattended kiosks, such as at train stations or gas pumps. Merchants on a chip-and-pin system may still be able to process strip cards, but you may need to press them politely to do so. Given this issue, however, it may be a good policy to always carry a little extra cash.

Chances are, your banking institution has set a daily limit on both ATM withdrawals and purchases for your account. In addition to informing your bank that you are traveling and will be using your card while abroad, you may wish to speak with them regarding your withdrawal and purchase limits. You will need to know what these limits are, and you may wish to request that they be raised for the duration of your trip.

Of course, most banks and some credit card companies charge fees for overseas use of their cards, but past students have found that banks and credit card companies provide the best exchange rates. The issue with European microchip card readers may occasionally make use of debit/credit cards problematic, but savings can make the effort worthwhile, as ATM withdrawal fees can be significant. There may be fees from the bank sponsoring the machine as well as your home bank. Additionally, there may be currency conversion fees, and certain other flat transaction fees. Withdrawing cash in large amounts (e.g. 300 Euro) is often the best way to avoid fees. Your bank may also charge a fee per debit transaction, however, which could add up quickly, so you should

check with your bank and/or credit card company to see which fees apply to ATM withdrawals, debit-card purchases, and credit card purchases. Fees can add up quickly, so it is worth doing some research so you can avoid them as much as possible. **Finally, some banks require notification that the card will be used abroad (i.e. what countries the card will be used in) PRIOR to departure or they will not work overseas. Most problems can be avoided by contacting your bank ahead of time.**

2.2 Online Banking

We assume that nowadays everyone has online banking. Italian ATM machines cannot display your account balance, or make transfers from savings accounts.

2.3 Using Cash

Depending on the value of the dollar to the euro, it may make sense to buy euros in the U.S. before leaving. Depending on the fees your bank charges, it may be less expensive to purchase euros, or traveler's checks denominated in euros, in your own city. Most banks do not hold foreign currency at the branch, so give yourself enough time to order the currency in advance. Most American Automobile Association (AAA) travel offices sell dollar and foreign currency Travelers Checks, but do not charge a commission to members.

You may purchase euros from exchange booths at the airport or in town when you arrive, but these booths often charge significant fees and have less favorable rates. Avoid bringing cash in dollars with you. Most banks only exchange currency for account holders, and even the post office places restrictions on which denominations it will exchange. Past students have found that the cheapest way to get cash while in Italy is by withdrawing it from an ATM.

2.4 Travelers Checks

Travelers Checks are generally not used in Italy anymore.

2.5 Budgeting

This seems like an obvious point, but many students neglect to plan their budgets in advance, and end up running out of money. Make sure you account for the exchange rate, weekend travel, souvenirs, etc.

2.6 Wiring Money

Even when you carefully plan your budget, emergencies happen, and sometimes it is necessary to have money wired from home. Both Western Union (800-225-5227) and MoneyGram (800-926-9400) have instant international wire transfer systems. If you visit one of their overseas offices or call them, you can pick up the money from their office shortly after the wire transfer is made. Another option is wiring money from a U.S. bank to a foreign bank. As a *last* resort, there is the option of contacting the U.S. State Department's Citizen Emergency Center (202-647-5225).

2.7 Safety Tips: ATM Fraud

To best prevent ATM fraud, there are a few important things to keep in mind:

- (1) If you have a money belt, it is probably better to take out larger amounts of money in fewer ATM transactions (however, use common sense about this: you don't want to lose or have 500 euros stolen). This is also a good idea because **most banks charge fees for overseas ATM withdrawals**, so using an ATM on a daily or even bi-weekly basis can really add up. Also, for safety reasons, the more ATM withdrawals you make from different ATMs, the greater your chances are of being a victim of ATM fraud.
- (2) Be very careful booking hotels, flights, hostels, etc. with your credit card in internet cafes. Sometimes the computers are set to remember credit card information, and the connections may not be secure. If you don't know how to check the computer settings, it is probably better to call to make these arrangements (but be aware that Italian airlines usually charge a per-minute fee for telephone reservations).
- (3) Most importantly, check your bank account balance online from time to time so that you know if you are a victim of ATM fraud, and keep track of your spending!

3. MAKING YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Booking your Flight to Europe

Rates

Participants must arrange and pay for their own transportation to Sorrento. Booking your flight should be done as early as possible because rates tend to increase as you get closer to your departure date. Priceline, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. are not necessarily cheaper than buying your tickets directly through the airline! Try Skyscanner or Student Universe. Ticket prices vary widely, so shop around! If you have connections via Canada or Europe, be sure to allow enough time, as you may have to go through customs or a passport control.

Destination

Since the program will begin on May 22, you will want to arrive at one of the Italian airports no later than that day. It is easiest (but may be more expensive) to fly to Naples. If you do that, there is a direct bus from the airport to Sorrento. If you fly into Rome, you will need to take a train to Naples and then a second (local) train to Sorrento.

Frequent Flyer Programs

If you don't have a frequent-flyer account set up with a particular airline, it might be smart to set one up prior to buying your tickets. Students have received up to 6,000 frequent flyer miles for this trip, which can really help toward free tickets in the future. If you already have a frequent-flyer account, try to purchase tickets through the same airline to benefit from the additional miles this trip will give you. Airlines usually still give frequent flyer miles for tickets purchased on sites like Expedia and Travelocity.

3.2 Airport Check-In

Arrive early, at least two and a half to three hours before your plane is scheduled to depart. Security measures are even greater for international flights. Upon arrival at the airport, go to the check-in counter for your airline. Call your airline in advance to check international regulations on allowable luggage and weight limits.

For those of you planning to fly within Europe on time off, please note that the weight limit is 20 kilos (44 lbs.) for checked luggage. This is a very light amount!! You will have to pay EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH fees at the airport ticket counter if you exceed it. Check with your airline as to the fees and as to the weight of the carry-on bag as well. You cannot carry on the 21-inch pulley bags that we use in the U.S. when you are in Europe or elsewhere. The weight limit for a carry-on can also be as low as 8 kilos (17.6 lbs). With these facts in mind, consider packing very, very lightly or plan to incur shipping costs to ship items back to the U.S.

You should also pack your carry-on bag so it can be easily opened by security. Make sure you have identification information both outside and inside the luggage. Your identification information should contain either the address of your home in Sorrento or the address of our host institution (see below) so that your luggage can be delivered there if it is lost.

Your name
c/o **Sant'Anna Institute**
Marina Grande, 16,
80067 Sorrento NA, Italy

3.3 The Flight

If you have never flown outside of the U.S. you should be prepared for a very long flight. If you are not able to sleep on the plane, you should bring books, magazines, etc. to entertain yourself. Those students applying for journals might want to work on their submissions on the plane. This will alleviate some of the pressure of completing them while in Sorrento, though students applying for journals should be aware that the proximity of departure to the end of finals makes it likely that you will be very busy working on your journal applications.

If you get motion sick, don't forget your Dramamine. Chewing gum can prevent your ears from popping on the plane's descent. You will probably be served two meals on the flight, along with several drinks. If you have special dietary restrictions, you need to notify the airline in advance. You may want to bring snacks in case the airline food is not to your liking. It is advisable NOT to drink alcohol on the flight, as it tends to prolong jet lag. There is an 8-hour time difference between Italy and Denver (it is eight hours later in Italy). Therefore, if you haven't slept on the plane, you will have missed the night. To adjust to the new time zone, you should plan on staying up all day and going to sleep at your normal bedtime in the evening. You also may want to avoid taking a nap the first day to make the adjustment easier.

3.4 What to Do When You Arrive

When you fly into Italy, you will go through immigration showing your passport (and visa if required for certain non-U.S. and non-EU citizens). You will pick up your checked luggage and then may be subject to customs inspection. If you have problems with receiving your luggage, you must put in a claim before leaving the baggage area. Then, depending on which airport you arrive at, head either for the bus or the train. The bus in Naples leaves from just outside the departures door at the airport. If you exit the airport and turn to your left you will find a white bus with a Sorrento placard in the front windshield. If you arrive in Rome, you will need to get to the train station and get a ticket to Naples. When you arrive in Naples, go downstairs and find the Circumvesuvian train that will take you directly to Sorrento.

4. PHONING HOME

4.1 Skype, GChat and others

There are many methods for staying in touch for free or for very limited cost. These methods change constantly and might include Skype, GChat, WhatsApp, WeChat, Vibr, Facebook messenger, and others. Please check which method is best before you go.

4.2 Cell Phones

All students are required to have a working phone upon which they can be reached in Italy. Many students are now buying Italian cell phones in various stores. We will assist you with this process upon arrival. For your family's peace of mind, you may want to strongly consider this option. Last year, it cost under 25 euros for a phone with a SIM card. There are smart phones now as well for slightly more. Phone cards give various levels of time. You can buy a monthly rate of time and data for about 20 euros. You may also be able to resell this phone for a reduced price to future program participants. Some participants use their Italian phones for pictures and some use their American phones, even if they are not otherwise using the phone as a phone.

We have found that having only a US phone and number is not convenient as it causes others to make an international phone call or send a text to reach you. A few people rent international phones from the U.S., but this is not as convenient as having an Italian phone.

Check with your cell phone provider about whether your U.S. phone can be adapted for use in Europe by changing to an Italian phone number. Some companies can unlock your cell phone so all you need is an Italian SIM card. If you do use a U.S. phone in Italy, you will need to bring an adapter for the Italian plugs.

4.3 Pay Phones / Phone Cards

Few people use the pay phone system anymore. If you do not buy a monthly phone plan for 20 euros, you can buy time. Telephone cards are available in various denominations and are sold at the Italy Telecom Office, and Tabac stores. These cards are the cheapest option.

5. GETTING AROUND IN SORRENTO AND IN EUROPE

5.1 Getting Around in Sorrento

Bring comfortable shoes, because walking will be your main mode of transportation. Sorrento itself is a fairly small town and can easily be walked. No matter where you chose to stay in town you will be able to walk to school. All buses and trains leave from the train station. You can buy bus tickets from the office downstairs to local destinations (i.e. the Amalfi Coast) and train tickets upstairs. Ferries to Capri and the other islands leave from the Marina Piccolo and you can buy tickets there.

5.2 Getting Around in Europe

If you are interested in traveling around Europe, you might wish to consider a Eurail pass, which can ONLY be purchased in the U.S. You can visit a travel agent for further information and schedules or go online. While this is option can be a beneficial and cost-saving option, it should be seriously researched, as there may be potential issues, particularly with regard to scheduling. Go to www.RailEurope.com. Passes purchased online may take weeks to be delivered, or you can sometimes pay to have them sent via Federal Express a few days before you leave. If you are under 26 and planning on either going to Europe a few days before the program or spending time in

Europe after the program, this is probably going to save you money.

If you do plan to buy a pass, try to coordinate with your friends while you are in the U.S. so you can carefully pre-select the countries you will actually travel through. If you end up not traveling through the countries you pre-selected, the pass is wasted. Also, you may then be paying extra on site to travel to countries you did not pre-select.

Additionally, check into cheap flights within Europe. Last year, some students did not use their pass as much as they thought they would, because it turned out to be cheaper and quicker to fly!

Bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles are available for rent in Sorrento. Cars are also available but please note that most cars available are manual transmission.

6. HOUSING

You are responsible for finding your own housing. I strongly recommend that you join up with other students and share a place—apartments in Sorrento are not cheap! If you are concerned with finances, you might consider staying in a town that is close to Sorrento rather than in town itself. Piano de Sorrento and Meta are on the local train line and easily accessible and cost about half as much as staying in Sorrento proper.

7. PACKING

7.1 REMEMBER THE PACK LIGHT ADMONITION!!

Remember you may be hauling your luggage by yourself up and down stairs through airports and subways without elevators. You may also have to pull it to the hotel. Remember you are carrying your course materials, notebook and other heavy things. I strongly recommend one checked piece, one carry-on that hooks or sits on the larger piece, and one small personal item such as a purse or small backpack. Put luggage tags outside each piece and put a sheet of paper with the address and phone of the hotel (see infra) inside each bag so that it can be sent to you if the outside tags fall off. Check with your airline about the weight limit per bag. Some airlines now charge extra for any bag over 50 lbs. and may even put limits on the weight of the carry-on!!! Your books must fit in along with your notebooks. (Some courses may give you the choice of on line materials instead). A laptop will count as your carry-on or personal item and you should not put it in your checked luggage!! If you are a Denver student and applying for a journal, you might consider carrying those materials on as well. Also do not check any valuables such as medicines, money, passport, jewelry etc. Carry them on. **Leave valuable items (jewelry, watches, rings etc.) at home totally.** Pickpocketing abroad can be a much bigger problem than in the U.S.

At the very minimum, you should carry a travel toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, comb/brush in your carry on, along with a change of underwear and maybe a fresh t-shirt, as you are flying overnight and will arrive in the early morning. If your luggage does not arrive, at least you have these basics with you. Remember to wear a flat fabric money belt underneath your pants (not an outside pouch) containing your credit cards, passport, cash, and traveler's checks, if you use them (I don't). Pick pockets can abound at the airport or train stations. Wear very comfortable clothes

and shoes on the plane as your feet are likely to swell.

7.2 Electrical Appliances

The Italian electrical system is DC, 220 volts. We use AC in the U.S. If you plan to use an electrical appliance, you should purchase both a converter (to convert DC to AC) and an adapter (to adapt your plug to the shape of the outlet) before you leave for Italy. **IT MAY BE EXTREMELY HARD TO PURCHASE CONVERTERS OR ADAPTERS ONCE YOU GET TO EUROPE, SO IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO IT BEFORE YOU LEAVE!!** Some places you may find converters include Walmart, Best Buy, or other major department or travel stores. You can also find them online at retailers such as Amazon. Students bringing laptop computers may only require an adapter, but are encouraged to check their computer's converter, manual, or contact the manufacturer for compatibility information. There are no computers available for classroom use, so you must bring your own.

7.3 Clothing

Again, pack lightly: try one week's clothing as a base. There are dry cleaners nearby to launder suits or other items. Temperatures may range from the low 50s in May (maybe with rain), to the high 70s or even 80s by the time we leave. Students are therefore advised to bring clothing suitable for spring/late winter, as well as summer attire. Air conditioning in all European countries is RARE. In Sorrento, shorts, low cut or belly tops etc. are not worn much in town on the street, and certainly cannot be worn while we are traveling as a group. You should bring things that are durable, easy to wash, and things that require little ironing.

You should bring at least one nice conservative outfit, since there will be visits to courts or other professional environments. **PLEASE BUY THESE ITEMS BEFORE ARRIVING IN EUROPE!!** For men, this attire will be a sport coat, tie and dress shirt, or a suit, along with dress shoes. For women, this can be a dress, pant suit, or suit with a skirt. Bring a pair of dress shoes that will be **comfortable**, since you may have to walk a great distance or wear the shoes for long periods. Some women bring a suit for court and a more festive outfit for dinners or going out. If you intend to visit a church or mosque, shorts or tank tops are usually not permitted. Sneakers or walking shoes are a must. You should also bring one or more sweaters, a raincoat, socks, umbrella etc., since May (but seldom June) can be quite chilly.

7.4 Other Items

Consider buying all toiletries, contacts, hair products, prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and personal items in the U.S. In Europe, the brand you want or the item itself may not exist, or may exist under another name with slightly different ingredients. If you do forget or run out, the local pharmacies and grocery stores have many items. While most students use their phone as a camera, a few may bring a separate camera/video.

7.5 Sample Packing List

(This is not all-inclusive, and I strongly suggest you make your own!)

Carry-On: [Check with your airlines re allowable items, size and weight of carry-ons, etc.] Passport,

printed e-ticket, Student ID card, Eurail pass, credit cards, money, contacts, contact solution, contact case(s), hairbrush, glasses, sunglasses, prescription medicine, Advil, spare underwear, essential toiletries in plastic baggy, (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.) (in case your luggage gets lost), Dramamine, Benadryl/Claritin/Epi-pen, umbrella, camera, computer, iPod, Bluebook (if you are planning on doing journal applications), reading material for planes and trains (disposable magazines and paperbacks are great.)

Suitcase: deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, makeup, soap, shampoo, etc., notebook(s), school books, clothes), swimwear, comfortable shoes, hair dryer, travel books (any countries you plan to visit), converter/adapters, travel iron, alarm clock.

8. OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

8.1 Respect for Foreign Customs

It is often easy to forget when traveling overseas that YOU are now the foreigner. While the Italian and other Europeans are normally very polite and helpful, you should not expect them to go out of their way to help you simply because you are American. While many Italian and other Europeans speak excellent English, **do not assume that everyone speaks English or is willing to speak English with you!** It is better to first ask the person whether he or she speaks English. Also keep in mind the following:

- Always respect local habits and customs. For example, in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, they eat later than in the states. They also take two hours or more for dinner, viewing dinner as an opportunity for socializing, during which food will come out at various intervals. It can be next to impossible to turn around a meal in an hour or less. I have found if I am in a “hurry,” it is better to eat in my apartment. When ordering, most waiters do not approach the table to take orders until all menus are closed, signaling that everyone is ready.
- When visiting museums, churches, and other attractions, keep your voices down (Americans stand out because they are loud!), and refrain from touching anything. Also, be sure to look presentable (no shorts, tank tops, etc.).
- Usually there will be no warnings to this effect, but Europeans expect these customs be heeded.
- Be careful about getting into political discussions. You may encounter anti-American sentiment or anti-American-government sentiment.
- Be wary about the combination of alcohol, politics, and innocent discussions with local members of the opposite sex, etc. Bar fights can occur in Italy, as well as the U.S.
- Remember rude or unhelpful people can occur in any culture.

8.3 Medical Matters

International health insurance coverage is mandatory for all University of Denver students traveling abroad for educational purposes. All students traveling abroad for such purposes must register with the Office of Study Abroad by completing on-line Passport information aid budget. Information and necessary forms are available on the program website.

Non-UI students should check with your insurance company before you leave to make sure you are covered in Europe. Some companies charge additional premiums for overseas coverage. The International Student Identity Card also includes medical insurance while overseas.

9. CLASSES

There is a draft schedule of courses available on the program website. Any revised schedules will be distributed just prior to departure, and there may be later updates distributed in Italy if necessary.

10. INTERNET ACCESS

Free Wi-Fi (wee-fee in Italian) Internet access is available at Sant'Anna Institute. Most restaurants have Wi-Fi but you will need to make a purchase in order to use it.

11. WEEKEND TRAVEL

While in Sorrento, you may wish to travel over one or more weekends, especially the three-day weekend. These trips can be arranged while in Sorrento, but should be done as early as possible, to secure good prices on tickets, etc. Past students have traveled as far as London, Ireland, Barcelona, Geneva, Germany, Italy, Amsterdam, Greece, and Corsica. Students may travel by plane, train or rent a car for the weekend. Car rentals can be very expensive; online sites offer better prices. Car rental companies give better pricing for longer rentals. Many rental cars have built in GPS, but may charge extra for the usage. Gas can be \$10 dollars a gallon or more, and is sold by the liter. There are 3.8 liters per gallon, so you may see prices of 1.12 or 1.20, but be aware that these are in liters and euros! Most cars for rent are manual shift. If they have automatic cars, it will be more expensive. Also, many companies do not rent to people under age 25. It might be smart to pack a smaller bag, like a duffel bag, to carry less with you on weekend trips. This smaller bag may be helpful if you end up buying a lot during the program. It is advisable to take your class materials with you so that you will be prepared when class resumes.

Although students often want to make the most of their time in Europe by travelling every weekend, I would advise staying in Sorrento at least one weekend—maybe the first or last weekend—to explore. You will not have all the time in the world to do that when you have class, so take some time to explore the awesome restaurants, and stroll through the shops in Sorrento. After all, it is a resort town so you should enjoy it.

12. TOURIST INFORMATION

Most students get their touristic advice from the internet. Some purchase hard copy travel guides as well. Many European cities have tourist offices that are often staffed with English speaking employees.

13. OTHER LOCAL INFORMATION

Information about Sorrento and the local area can be obtained from the internet and the local tourist office, located between the railroad station and the main post office. Check out the city website at <http://www.sorrentotourism.com/en/>.

14. MAILING YOUR LUGGAGE HOME

There is a small post office in Sorrento, and you can mail boxes or your suitcases back home. The cost of mailing your suitcase back is similar to what it would cost you at the airport if you have more luggage than what is allotted. Keep in mind though that if you need large boxes, you'll have to provide that yourself. Also any zippers and pull out handles on the luggage that you're mailing must be tightly taped. When you are packing your luggage for mailing, keep a detailed list of its content because as part of the mailing process, you'll have to declare the contents item by item on a customs form that will travel with your luggage. Once you check your luggage from Italy, it takes about 3-4 weeks before it arrives in the U.S. There are expedited methods as well.

15. BRINGING LIQUID SOUVENIRS HOME

As students travel, they often buy souvenirs to bring home. Sometimes, these souvenirs are liquids (a bottle of wine or a bottle of olive oil from Italy to mention a few). Liquid items cannot be mailed through the post office system. They must be packed in your checked baggage. There isn't a strict upper limit on the number of bottles of wines or oils that you can bring back but, you will have to go through the U.S customs as soon as you land and may have to prove to the customs officers that these items are for personal use and not for resale. Usually, the weight of the bottles and space limits the students in the number of bottles that they bring back.

Packing your wine or oil in your checked bag can be another challenge. Although many students wrap their bottles with their clothes, this is not advisable because if a bottle of red wine breaks in your suitcase, it can ruin all of the contents in your bag. So, as an alternative method, it is recommended that the students buy a disposable "wine diaper" to pack their wines and oils. You can buy the "wine diapers" through Amazon.com https://www.amazon.com/Wine-Skin-WineSkin-Bag-8-Pack/dp/B00GIX531O/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1473787494&sr=8-3&keywords=wine+diapers.

16. VAT REFUND

Some retailers (especially high-end retailers) may choose to give you a VAT refund. Value-Added-Refund or VAT refund is a tax refund given to travelers who buy merchandise in Europe, and it can range from 15-25% per country. Although you are not entitled to the refund on your hotels and meals, you can get most of the tax you paid on clothes and other souvenirs. One caveat is that you

are not supposed to use the merchandise before you leave the country.

In Italy, your purchases amount must exceed €175.01. When you shop, bring along your passport and present it to the retailer when you make a purchase. Then ask the merchant to fill out the “tax-free form.” At the airport or your other point of departure, bring your paperwork and purchases and have the customs officer stamp at the VAT station. Then you can receive the tax refund.