

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Sojourns Abroad
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1. **Passport** must be valid for six months after the end of the program. If you need a new one you can send your old passport by mail (this normally takes 4-7 weeks). If you don't have this much time, you can expedite the process by mail by paying an extra fee (takes 14 business days). If you have even less time, you can take your old passport in person (along with flight itinerary) to a local passport agency. For more information, check out www.traveldocs.com or www.passportexpress.com. Students in formal academic programs are required to have a student visa to enter the EU. You can consider yourself a tourist and should self-identify as such if asked by immigration officials at passport control. This means that you are entitled to remain for 90 days from your date of entry. You must then leave the EU but are eligible to return again without hassle. If at the passport control desk, you say you are entering as a tourist, your passport will be stamped for a 90 day stay if it is stamped at all.

2. **Meeting in the Site City/Travel Arrangements** Participants should plan to arrive in the destination city by 3:00 p.m. on the designated date. Arrivals after 3:00 p.m. may necessitate taking a taxi at your own expense. Regarding travel planning, we suggest Karen Chieppa at Global Vision Travel (800.386.4449, E-mail gvt@pon.net). Once your travel plans are set, please complete and return Participant Information Form.

3. **Health Insurance/Trip Cancellation Insurance** Health insurance is required for the duration of your time with Sojourns Abroad. Note: Travel agents can arrange for Health/Trip Cancellation insurance. If you would like to arrange this separately, the following websites are extensive: www.insuremytrip.com and www.travel.state.gov.

4. **Living Arrangements** While in the site city, participants will stay with carefully selected families. The Homestay combined with focused language study is an ideal way to learn about local life and customs, and thus feel part of one's host family and community.

5. **Spending Money** The comprehensive fee for Sojourns Abroad includes an introduction to various cultural events (music and dance concerts, theater performances, introductory visits to health clubs and sports events). Those interested in attending any of these more frequently should plan accordingly.

Arrangements can be made for those interested in private music or dance classes, and allowances should be budgeted.

Lunches, laundry, and incidentals such as phone calls, E-mail and personal items are added expenses; \$500-700 per month should suffice.

ATM machines are easily accessible so a debit card is recommended. Travelers checks are an alternative. It is good to have a credit card as a back-up and to have c. \$100 in USD.

6. **Language Classes** Language classes take place each morning, Monday through Friday. Classes are intimate, customarily (no more than six students in a class) and are structured to accommodate every level of ability. No previous language study or capability is necessary. Teachers are charismatic and classes take place both indoors and out in the city.

7. **How group oriented is the program?** While Sojourns Abroad is a group program enrolling no more than c. 12 participants per session, it has been designed with the individual in mind. Individuals are encouraged to immerse themselves in the local culture in order to get the most out of their time. Varied group activities are offered each week and on most weekends.

8. **Free Time** There is much to do and enjoy and ample free time to wander in the site city, to hang out and enjoy new friends.

9. **Special Projects** Participants have expressed various special interests. We encourage taking on a personal project, and enjoy assisting in such endeavors. Special projects can be part of an effort to obtain academic credit or merely represent specific personal interests (e.g. in a particular artist, history, music, sports). The possibilities are myriad.

10. **Visitors** Of course, if your parents and siblings can visit, by all means have them do so, ideally toward the end of the session.

11. **Extravaganzas** Exclusively for participants. Sojourns Abroad occasionally offers optional week-long sojourns at the beginning and/or end of each session. These provide an opportunity to join the Directors for cultural immersion in particularly notable European cities or geographical areas.

12. **Mail**

Letters and packages can be sent to:

Participant's Name

c/o Saena Julia

via Monna Agnese, 20

Siena 53100, Italy

Add to Fed Ex packages: Tel. 011.39.05.77.44.155

Paris, France

To be determined

Add to Fed Ex packages: Tel. 011

Packages that are marked as containing food items, tobacco, medicine are sometimes difficult and costly to obtain from customs especially if a relatively high value has been indicated.

E-mail

Computers are available at the language school in Siena and in both cities there are many internet cafés. A word of caution: of course you want to stay in touch with family and friends. If, however, computer or video games are a major pastime of yours, we will expect that this diversion will not detract from your active involvement in the program.

Cell Phones

These are handy and are easily available for purchase.