

BUON VIAGGIO!

PRE-DEPARTURE PACKING LIST & ADVICE

1. Clothes

Fall semester students: When you arrive in August, it will be very hot and humid (in fact, it won't seem like there are any Romans living there because they will all be at the beach!). Plan on clothes for three seasons: summer, fall, and winter. Think layers. November and December will be cold and damp. You need a winter coat, hat, mittens, raincoat, comfortable shoes with a good grip (pavement is uneven and wet cobblestones are slippery), good rainy day shoes, and an umbrella (you can buy it on the street there). Bring warm pajamas and sweats to wear around the house, as heating in the apartments in Italy is different than it is in the US.

Spring semester students: Bring warm clothes (as described above for November and December) for January, February and March- it rains during these months. Bring warm pajamas and sweats to wear around the house as heating in the apartments in Italy is different than it is in the US. Think layers! In late March and April, the temperature is a little warmer during the day ---you may or may not need a light jacket; while sometimes in May, it can already be hot. During many field trips and around Rome, bear in mind that you will not be permitted to enter certain churches, including and especially St. Peter's, if your shoulders or knees are not covered.

- **More on Shoes** You will be walking greater distances and at quicker speeds than on the Cornell campus (especially if you're taking the Arch history courses), and the cobblestone streets in Rome can be very uneven, so bring sensible and comfortable shoes with a sole firm enough to easily manage the cobblestones, wet or dry. **Roman streets are very slippery when wet!!! Save your flip-flops for the beach.**

Dressier Clothes Italians dress up more frequently than Americans and they do so for just about every occasion, even for minor errands and chores such as walking the dog or going to the supermarket. If you don't want to stick out as a tourist, you have to pay attention to style and appearance. Public image is important in Italian culture. Bring some good clothes for going out to dinner at something other than a trattoria/pizzeria. Again, save your flip-flops for your apartment or the beach.

2. Money : Euro is the official currency in Italy and the EU.

The easiest way to get cash is to use an ATM card. Contact your bank before leaving the US to be properly informed on how your ATM card will work and what fees you will incur in Italy. The Cornell Federal Credit Union ATM card usually works in Rome, but make sure to check with your bank before departing. Your ATM card must be linked with the CIRRUS/PLUS network. At CFCU, cash withdrawals are taken from your Savings Account (will not directly access your checking account). The CFCU has a phone access line through which you can transfer funds from one account to another. The exchange rate is better through ATM transactions than through exchange offices or American Express, but check with your bank about its own additional fees.

-Though **bringing traveler's checks to Italy is not advised**, American Express travelers checks can be cashed at the AmEx office in Rome, located at Piazza di Spagna, 38. Hours 09:00-17:30; Sat. 9:00- 12:00. Tel: (06) 72282 All other forms of traveler's checks are discouraged as Italian banks make them difficult and expensive to cash.

-General bank hours: 08:30-13:15/15:00-16:15. Closed Saturdays and Sundays. (For specific hours check with the specific bank). Banks do not cash personal or bank checks unless one has an account with them. Cornell in Rome suggests against foreigners opening bank accounts in Italy as the cost and time required to do so are great.

-Credit cards can be used to obtain cash at most banks. You must have your passport with you to do this. (very high service charge)

-Cash exchange on Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 106 (near Largo Argentina). They charge a commission. Mon.-Fri. 8:30-13:00/15:00-17:00, Sat 09:00-13:00. (Tel: (06)6830 8406 or (06)686 8584).

To cancel Lost or Stolen cards:

American Express (06) 72282

Visa/Mastercard 800 868 086

Diner's Club 800-864-064 main Tel: (06)35751)

Money Transfer from the United States

You can have money sent to you from the US using Western Union in case of emergency or general need (general info: www.westernunion.com/ 800-464-464).

There are several tabacchi and phone centers that work with Western Union in the centro storico; please consult the website or the palazzo office to find one near you. The sender of the funds must inform you of the exact amount sent, date, and all other information provided at the time of the money transfer. To obtain the money, you must know the exact amount, date sent, name of sender, and sending code, and have your passport with you. You can usually pick up the money at the agency the day after it has been sent. Western Union will issue your money transfer in cash in Euro.

3. Telephone Communication Long distance calls can be made from Cornell apartments with pre-paid Italian calling cards (which are the cheapest way to call home), or with cards from US carriers, like AT&T, MCI, etc. (but these are much more expensive!). Cornell apartments also have wireless Internet connection.

- Purchase pre-paid international calling cards in Italy at a Tabaccaio shop, which is marked on the outside with a large T on a sign. Ask for *EUROPA* or *EUROCITY* cards or simply ask for "*una scheda internazionale per gli Stati Uniti,*" which can be used from your apartments or public phones through local access numbers. Rates range from .06 -.10 cents per minute to the US, Canada, and Australia/NZ, with slightly higher rates to some parts of Asia.
- Purchase pre-paid domestic calling cards for calls within Italy from public pay phones. These TELECOM SCHEDE are good for domestic calls but rates within Italy are high. Working payphones are also becoming harder to find as almost everyone in Italy carries a mobile phone. *Nonetheless, carry a domestic calling card while travelling and on field trips in Italy.*
- Buying a mobile/cell phone (telefonino) once in Italy is cheap and easy to do. No annual contract is necessary and you can simply refill your account with prepaid calling cards. You are not charged for incoming calls within Italy, so people can call you from anywhere in the world at no expense to you. Beware that some cell phones sold in Italy work only while in Europe and may not work in the US or

other non-European countries. If you want to bring the phone back with you to the US, make sure you purchase a triband phone in Italy. For more information on cellular phones and Europe, consult:

http://www.slowtrav.com/europe/cell_phones.htm

4. **Security** Be aware of your surroundings. Though generally safer than most large American cities, Rome battles with the chronic plague of petty theft and pickpockets. It's a good idea not to carry a bag that closes only with a magnetic clasp; small, zippered packs worn around the waist and purses that hang low are also favorite targets of the city's talented pickpockets. We recommend that you carry the cash you think you need for a particular outing in a pocket, so that you do not have to frequently go into your pack to extract a wallet (at least while you're settling in). Keep a hand on your bag while on the bus; when in a bar; do not leave your backpack unattended while at the counter ordering. Stay alert and use common sense.
5. **Health Services** The program can refer you to English-speaking doctors and dentists while in Rome. You will be required to pay up front for services rendered (they do not do billing to the company for you), and some insurance plans will not pay for all expenses, or will reimburse only a small percentage of the charge. Be clear about how to handle your claims before you depart. Students should do all check-ups or other anticipated medical procedures before their departure if possible. Also, many medical professionals do not accept credit cards at their practices, so if an office visit becomes necessary, count on needing cash and asking for a receipt.
6. **Sufficient Supply of Prescription Drugs** European medicines are sometimes calibrated differently than medicines in the US. If you are now taking prescription drugs, it is advisable to take note of the strength of each dosage and chemical composition. The local pharmacies do stock an abundance of medications, but you should have a clear idea of what you want or need. Also, if you get motion sickness on winding roads (as much of the semester's travels include long bus rides), you might want to bring a supply of Bonine, a less drowsy alternative to Dramamine.
Medication cannot be shipped from the US, so plan ahead.
Psychotherapeutic Medications
Psychotherapeutic medications normally prescribed in US might not be allowed in Italy because they are considered drugs. The student found with such medication or with more than the daily-prescribed dosage could get in serious trouble and be asked to leave the country. To avoid this, it is important that prior to arrival, the student in need of psychotherapeutic medications should check with his/her doctor if they can take certain medicine into Italy or other European countries they are planning to visit. If the medicine is not allowed and the student cannot substitute it with one allowed in Italy, the student has to request his doctor to write a certificate specifying the reasons why he/she is taking that medicine, the dosage required for the length of one's stay, and why he is traveling into the country with a certain amount.
Psychotherapeutic Medications cannot be shipped to Italy.
7. **Supplies** Students can bring their favorite basic necessities for studio or plan to buy supplies there. Most items are available in Rome but the exchange rate is not as favorable as it has been in previous semesters. Definitely plan to buy larger items such as sketchbooks in Italy. Items we definitely recommend you buy here and bring

with you include exact-o blades (do NOT put these in your carry-on) and cutting mats (for the architecture students).

8. **Computers, etc** Students should bring CDs and/ personal USB drives for storing files; they can also be bought in Rome. **Please make sure that you bring a plug/power adapter for your laptop. Contact a computer dealer to be sure the right item is purchased. Voltage in Italy and Europe is 220 volts.**

For more info. check: <http://www.voltagevalet.com/computer.html>

Also, the computer lab, studio facilities and Cornell apartments have wireless Internet access. **Students are encouraged to bring laptops with wireless cards installed that allow for wireless access to Internet.**

9. **Specialized Products** You should bring items such as contact lens solution to last an entire semester. Though this is available in Italy, it is usually more expensive and many pharmacies do not have the same products that are available in the US. Be sure to bring an extra pair of contacts or glasses, as well as your eyeglass prescription. You'll be able to buy almost any toiletry you need in Rome, including some very fine Italian brands at prices no higher than what you are paying now. Consider taking travel-size items with you and then re-stocking in Rome after you settle into your routine.

10. **Miscellaneous Items and Pieces of Advice**

- Bring a **backpack** or small piece of luggage for the one-day field trips. A larger, but not too large, piece of luggage is also needed for the longer trips (5-9 days). A dufflebag rather than a bag with wheels is recommended (easier to use on cobbles and when in small towns with long flights of stairs, etc.)
- A travel-size **Italian-English dictionary** is essential for practicing new words and phrases.
- We will provide you with a detailed map of the city center when you arrive.
- **If you want a Eurail pass, you must buy it in the US; they are not available in Europe.** Check the web at www.eurail.com for helpful details.
- Travel and visitors during the semester: Please make sure not to schedule any personal travel plans or plan to host visitors from the US during mandatory program field trips. For security and liability reasons guests cannot accompany students on program field trips.
- STRIKES are common in Europe (trains, buses, etc.), especially in Italy. If a strike should occur on your arrival day, please be prepared. Have enough Euro with you to take a taxi—which can cost Euro 50.00 (or more) from the airport to the Palazzo.
- **Do not have computers, cameras, video cameras, various technological equipment, etc. mailed to you while in Rome because you will be required to pay an enormous tax on them once they arrive in Italy (they are not duty free—subject to 30% tax).**

- **Do not have over-the-counter or prescription medication sent to you in the mail.**
- **Do not have mail sent to you at the apartments.** This makes it easier for you to receive mail and packages. Each student has a mailbox at the Palazzo. The address is:
**Cornell in Rome
Palazzo Lazzaroni
Via dei Barbieri, 6
00186 Roma Italia**
- If you anticipate collecting extra items during your stay abroad, plan to buy an extra suitcase there if you need it (they are inexpensive). The cost to carry an extra piece of luggage will be less than it costs to ship boxes back home.

(As of April 2009, Euro 1.00 = approx. \$1.36)