

20TH ANNIVERSARY

THE AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE THAT INSPIRED



THE PBS TRAVEL SERIES WITH KATHY McCABE

DREAM OF ITALY®

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HOW TO
PLAN AN
EXTENDED
STAY *in Italy*

PLUS

VERO IN ITALY
THE REAL UMBRIA

AQUILEIA
A SECRET TO DISCOVER



RESOURCES and IDEAS

ADULT STUDY ABROAD AND MORE

By Danielle Abbazia

If it seems daunting to pack up your life and move to Italy for an extended stay: *Tranquilli!* There are many resources to help make your dream a reality.

If detailed planning isn't your thing, turn to one of the companies, including a prestigious university, that are offering adult study abroad or co-working/cultural programs.

If truly immersing yourself into Italian life is part of your goal for an extended stay, enroll in an Italian language school, which can also offer the possibility of a student visa for a longer stay. You can also come to Italy to learn to teach English which may provide work options in the future.

If you are budget conscious, exchanging homes or arranging to pet sit may be good options for an extended stay in Italy. Here are some of our favorite resources:

Attend Italian Language School

Enrolling in Italian language school is the perfect way to dive into the culture and join a community of interesting people. There are thousands of language schools and we recommend narrowing the options down according to where you want to go, accreditation, online reviews and recommendations from friends.

One suggestion is the winner of the 2022 *StudyTravel Magazine* award for Best Italian Language School in Italy, *Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci* (www.scuolaleonardo.com). At their locations in Rome, Florence, Milan, Turin and Viareggio, the school offers weekly start dates for varying levels of Italian and boasts 200,000 students to date.

Small student numbers make their courses stand out amongst other schools in Italy with class size ranging

from 3 people to 14 people maximum. The in-person classes range from 225€ for 20 lessons over the course of one week to 5,760€ for 960 lessons over the course of 48 weeks.

One option for visas for longer (but not permanent) stays is to obtain a student visa. On this visa, visitors must be enrolled in an *accredited* language institution or university for at least 20 hours a week and they are permitted to work up to 20 hours a week. DILIT in Rome (www.dilit.it) is one such accredited school, recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education.

Usually, schools assist students in obtaining visas, but often you will need to show proof of accommodation and adequate finances for the length of your stay. The visa should be obtained from your homebase consulate. Please note, when applying for student visas, the ministry prefers to see proof you are studying Italian before application, so you may be required to show proof of attendance at current language courses and show a letter from your teacher.

Also check out the June/July 2022 issue of *Dream of Italy* for our tips on learning Italian.

HomeExchange.com

Home Exchange with nearly 500,000 listings around the world offers classic home exchanges where you swap your home for a stay in someone else's home. What makes this website unique however is their GuestPoints option. These points are used, for example, if you stay at someone's



Shopping like a local with Road Scholar

home but they do not stay at yours in exchange. If you stay for 5 nights and obtain 100 GuestPoints per night, that would give your guests 500 GPs to put towards a stay at another member's home.

For an annual membership fee of \$175, you are guaranteed an unlimited number of exchanges. You also receive member support, assistance in case of cancellation, and property damage coverage.

Home Exchange also invites members to Facebook groups which foster conversations with other members of the community. Chats are hosted by volunteer ambassadors and topics cover areas such as tips for travel or questions on destinations.

As Home Exchange says, "we are all guests and hosts" and more times than not, homes are left in perfect condition when guests leave. The close community encourages the delicate care of other people's homes, given that sooner rather than later, you too will be playing host and inviting people into your own space.

www.homeexchange.com

Road Scholar

Road Scholar, formerly known as ElderHostel, has been one of the biggest names in educational travel since 1975. Learn to live (and speak and gesture) like a Florentine with Road Scholar's *Living and Learning in Florence* program. Link up with like-minded lifelong learners in this six-week immersive program that includes classes on the Italian language, Italian body language, art, history and cooking. Professors move lectures onto the streets



Daily classes with Road Scholar

of the city and you will see in person what you have only previously studied in textbooks.

This program offers "survival Italian" ensuring you will be able to order a *cappuccino* at the bar and confidently have conversations navigating the nuanced what-to-do and what-not-to-do of Italian culture. On Saturday mornings, you can test your language skills at a local market, away from the vendors catering to English-speaking tourists, and choose your ingredients for a home-cooked meal. An organized weekend trip to Volterra is a highlight of the program.

Accommodation in Florence is provided independent apartments with 24/7 access to a team member for assistance. Solo travelers are more than welcome and make up for about a quarter of participants.

Living and Learning in Florence (9,500€) is sold out for 2023, but runs twice yearly with programs starting in April and September. Road Scholar also offers shorter, non-residential programs at lower price points in different Italian cities. www.road scholar.org; (800) 454-5768

Sabbatical Homes

The Sabbatical Homes community is built of "academics and thinkers" with most of their members in the world of academia. This user-friendly database lets you post your home as a potential rental or exchange for a listing fee of \$60.

If offering your abode is not for you, it's possible to list yourself as a potential tenant for a \$20 listing fee and search for accommodations you'd like to stay in. You can offer your services as a house sitter or share a house with



ANNA RICHEY

Sojrn aperitivo

other like-minded individuals in dozens of Italian cities and towns.

With Sabbatical Homes there is no middleman between you and your potential matches. You deal directly with the owners via their messaging platform. In order to provide a safety barrier and avoid scams, Sabbatical Homes created a system in which each user earns a Trust Score, which everyone can see on public profiles and grows with each successful transaction.

Sabbatical Homes offers a home exchange option. Potential traders can post their home on their public profile and insert data for their preferred destinations, alternate destinations, and dates they wish to do the swap. If your interests align with another user's profile, you are free to connect and get the ball rolling. Some profiles also accept non-simultaneous home exchanges and often the price for the exchanges is an even swap.

For connections made using their site, Sabbatical Homes charges a \$50 Made-a-Match fee for when two matches move ahead with a lease or a contract. Stays can range from a few days to a few months, depending on what works for you and your matches. www.sabbaticalhomes.com

Sojrn

Looking to dive into Italian culture while still working remotely? Sojrn's programs offer housing, culture, community and co-working spaces with high-speed Internet (which is key isn't it?).

Sojrn's locations are called chapters and each four-week program includes accommodations, a local and chapter host at your disposal, two group activities per week, weekly happy hour, two group meals and optional weekly activities. The idea is to foster learning and community but to leave you enough free time to both explore the area and work remotely or both.

Sojrn's *History in Rome* program is focused on Roman history with themed week including: *Benvenuto*, Ancient Origins, Caesar & Augustus and Legacy. The city's ruins serve as the textbook. In *Siena*, the *Wine in Tuscany* program will take participants from novice to wine connoisseur with its four themed weeks: Make, Sip, Pair and Order.

Prices start at \$5,899 for History in Rome and \$4,499 for Wine in Tuscany and with both running in April and October 2023. www.sojrn.travel

Stay Awhile

In the culinary capital of Italy, *Bologna*, you can spend a month diving headfirst into the flavors of the region - Balsamic vinegar, *Parmigiano Reggiano*, *mortadella* to name just a few- with *Stay Awhile*. Plus, you will have all you need to comfortably work and live remotely either in a private or shared apartment.

Local hosts and the Stay Awhile team invite you to weekly meals at Bologna's world-famous restaurants. Each week there are also excursions or classes, such as vineyard visits or pasta-making classes. This is after all the capital of *tortellini*. The Bologna location makes for easy weekend trips to Italy's major cities like Milan, Florence and Venice.

There's a dedicated co-working space for all participants to meet and work. Rates for the 18-day program start at \$4,695 for a private apartment or \$4,195 for a private room in a shared apartment.

www.stayawhiletravel.com

Teaching English as a Foreign Language—TEFL Certification

For native-level English speakers, your mother tongue opens a world of unique career opportunities abroad. With a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification, you will qualify to teach English in Italy and around the world. Several companies offer this standardized certificate with courses offered in most major cities.

One such company, The International TEFL Academy (ITA), is more than an opportunity to get certified, it is also a means to explore Italian life and culture and connect with fellow participants. The team at ITA says they have students whose ages span the gamut and who come from

a wide array of backgrounds—not strictly education!

For the ITA Rome (\$1,950) and ITA Florence (\$1,495) courses, participants are responsible for finding their own housing, but partners of the school can assist with this task. Often, students room with fellow course goers. The rigorous classes run five days a week. Homework is often assigned, with weekends generally free.

Upon completion of accredited TEFL courses, participants earn a widely recognized certification and possess the skills needed to teach English. Keep in mind, non-European Union citizens are not permitted to work on a tourist visa, but an accredited TEFL institution can assist you in obtaining a student visa which allows for 20 hours of work per week as long as you also participate in 20 hours of Italian lessons at an accredited school. Demand for English teachers is highest in large cities like Rome and Milan and demand spikes for teachers in September and January.

The courses with the International TEFL Academy run monthly multiple times a year. www.internationalteflacademy.com; (773) 634-9900

Temple University Adult Study Abroad

The Eternal City is now a classroom for eternal learners! Temple University Rome has expanded their class offerings to include adult study abroad programs. A six-week course covers millenia of Roman history taught by faculty of Temple Rome.

Courses, taught in the classroom and around the city, cover Italian history from Etruscan to Baroque periods. Language courses offer basic level Italian. Extra-curricular activities range from wine lessons with a sommelier to Italian jazz nights.

For anyone eager to learn even more than the adult study abroad base curriculum has to offer, there's the option to audit the undergraduate courses offered at Temple Rome (for an additional \$500). The school organizes optional excursions to explore southern destinations such as Pompeii and Sorrento (for an additional \$500).

Sessions run May to June and September to October with classes held Monday to Thursday.

The base fee for the the six-week course is \$3,000. Buddy discounts are also available, so if you sign up with one or more friends, you will each receive a 10% discount. You must find your own housing although Temple can help. www.rome.temple.edu; (215) 204-0720



Students learn to make tortellini with Stay Awhile in Bologna

TrustedHousesitters.com

Trusted Housesitters is a fun and innovative website where you can find accommodation and pay for your stay by taking care of the pet of the home while their owners are away. Taking a local dog for a walk is a gratifying way to explore a neighborhood while feeling the companionship of an animal at your side. Doesn't everyone talk to you when you have a dog?

When you sign up as a sitter, you create a profile and purchase a sitter plan. Plans start at \$119 a year for unlimited sitting opportunities worldwide. Higher priced plans offer things such as cancellation insurance and premium badge markers on your profile, with the top tier sitter plan set at \$239 per year.

Trusted Housesitters provides sitters with a 24/7 emergency vet hotline if you have any questions. Their app makes it a breeze to provide the pet parents with updates and share messages and photos of their cuddly family members enjoying themselves in your care.

For those sitters who have pets at home, you can sign up for the combined Pet Parent and Sitter plan to ensure a verified, trusted sitter can stay home with your own pet while you are in Italy exploring a new locale and taking care of someone else's. Combined plans start at \$179 per year for unlimited verified housesitters and unlimited house sits as a sitter. www.trustedhousesitters.com; (844) 293 6126 🐾



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