

# HOUSING

AT FUA





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The Housing Office is pleased to assist with the housing arrangement process for students. We do not own or lease apartments but work as a facilitator to assist students in finding accommodation during their stay in Florence. The Housing Office's objective is to facilitate the students' study abroad experience. Students choosing to secure housing independently must notify the admissions office. Housing options that we arrange for incoming students are:

## **Apartment Housing:**

- Shared Apartments
- Italian Family Home-stays

**Housing Assignments and Availability:** Apartments will be assigned on a first come, first served basis according to availability, and are communicated at least 20 days prior to arrival in Florence. Depending on their request, students will be assigned to a single or shared bedroom in a furnished apartment that will be shared with other students. If a student request cannot be met due to space limitations, the student will be assigned according to availability and notified before arrival. Students will not be able to choose their apartment or change roommates. All roommate requests must be specified on the housing request form.

**Rental, Deposit and Check in/out Information:** The rental period begins one day before the program start date and ends one day after the last day of class. A refundable security deposit must be paid with the program application. Students will be responsible for any damages to their apartment or its furnishings and will have all damage costs removed from their security deposit. In the case of a single student who is responsible for the damage, only the individual will pay repairs with his or her deposit. When it is impossible to determine which individuals are responsible, the repairs will be charged to the entire group of students in the apartment. Check-in information is communicated to students prior to arrival, along with the housing assignment. Keys will be provided at check-in. Students will not be allowed to check into their apartments before the check-in date or to check out of their apartments after check-out date. The Housing Office makes every attempt to place students according to any needs they might have.

**Pick-up Services:** Students arriving in Pisa or Florence individually and not with pre-arranged group pick-up services may make a separate request to the Housing Office. Separate requests required an extra charge. Please note: arrival date and time must be communicated at least two weeks prior to arrival.

**Health Disclosure:** If the student has a medical condition or disability that needs to be disclosed to the Housing Office and which requires specific attention, please let us know either via email or on the housing application form.

**Housing Assistance During Study Abroad:** The FUA Housing Office assists students with housing concerns, emergencies or issues throughout their stay in Florence. The department can be contacted by walk-in visits to the office, by email, or by phone. After office hours, for emergencies that require immediate assistance, a housing number is available 24/7. The housing rules provided to all students upon check-in indicate what constitutes or does not constitute an emergency.

## APARTMENT HOUSING

**Apartment Location:** Students are housed in apartments throughout the historic center of Florence, within a 15-20 minute walk to Palazzi and FUA facilities. The Housing Office will complete assignments only for students who request housing within the designated deadline.

**Apartment Layouts:** The apartments are fully furnished and fully functional. Utilities are included in the housing cost. The standard layout of the apartments consists of multiple bedrooms, multiple bathrooms (variable), kitchen, living/dining room space. The bedrooms range from single bedrooms for one occupant (limited availability) to triple bedrooms, with the occasional quad space. Shared bedrooms can host 2 to 4 occupants. There will also be sufficient closet space to accommodate a reasonable amount of clothing and luggage. A very limited number have only one bedroom, and some have more than 3 bedrooms. In most shared apartments, students number 4-6. Housing in residences can be arranged in a dormitory format and can house 14-16 students; this option has limited availability. Students in any housing system will be sharing the apartment with other students. Although apartments are of the same standard (see below) and have similar facilities, no two apartments are alike. They are not all located in the same neighborhood, but are all within walking distance of our campuses or the nearest bus route.

**What to Expect:** Apartments may have different layouts. There are a few living factors in Italy that will require special attention. For example: Several historic palaces have thick walls, which may slow down internet speed/connection.

Elevators are not guaranteed in every building.

In order to reduce energy consumption, not all buildings have air conditioning.

Dryers for laundry are not included in apartments, as they are less used in Italy. Drying racks are always provided. Due to legal regulations on heating during the winter, room temperature in apartments does not exceed 20°C (68°F). This is applied to the period from the beginning of November to the end of April.







# Frequently Asked Questions for Apartments

## What amenities do the apartments/residences offer?

The apartments come fully furnished, with fully functional kitchens. The typical Italian kitchen comes equipped with stove/oven or microwave and refrigerator, basic pots and pans, and essential kitchen utensils. Additional amenities are dependent on the landlords/housing agencies and not Palazzi/FUA. Apartments/residences will also come equipped with bed linens, including sheets, pillows and blankets. Bathroom towels are not included.

## Where are the apartments/residences located?

Florence is a walking town. Once students get acclimated to the city's layout, the initial novelty of walking quickly becomes a habit. That said, students should expect to be in an apartment/residence that requires walking.

## What if I'm dissatisfied with my housing placement?

We try as best as possible to place you in an environment where you will feel comfortable and at home. Most roommate and location issues are typically resolved with mediation through the Housing Office in a timely manner. In the event of a roommate dispute, we ask that the students involved make every attempt to resolve the situation constructively. Part of the housing application process involves submitting a likes/dislikes survey, as well as the opportunity to make specific roommate requests. As long as the requests are made in a timely fashion prior to your arrival in Florence, we can typically meet your requests. Housing is always subject to change, and we do our best to alert students of all eventual changes in a timely manner. Any changes are to be made at the discretion of the Housing Office.

## How many people are expected to share a bathroom in the apartments/residences?

Depending on the number of occupants, the number of bathrooms per apartment/residence varies. Typically speaking, 4 people can share a bathroom. Given our relationship with housing agencies and private landlords, we do our best to place students in apartments/residences that accommodate 4 people per bathroom.

## Is there a deadline to apply for housing?

Yes - your housing application is due with the rest of your application.

## Can I request co-ed or single sex housing?

Generally housing is limited to single sex options, although if a special request is made, we do try to meet your requests. If housing is co-ed, it's generally housing in a residence, as those options are more spacious.

## Can I request changes to my housing after I arrive?

While we try to meet requests, it's not always possible to modify confirmed housing after check-in. If requests can be satisfied without creating additional issues for other students, we're happy to make adjustments. However, this remains at the discretion of the housing department.

## Can I check-in earlier or later than the scheduled check-in date?

Early departure/arrival is not permitted. Please check with the Housing Office if you have a special circumstance that you would like to address. The apartments are occupied prior or immediately following your arrival/departure, and we need to accommodate the current tenant needs before making any adjustments to an arrival/departure date that falls outside of the scheduled date.

## Where do I pick up my keys?

Your keys, along with a map and other instructions on your apartment, will be given to you upon your check-in, either at the school or directly at the apartment/residence as communicated prior to your arrival.

## Benefits to apartment living centrally located apartments help students to gain:

Independence and sense of familiarity in new surroundings. Confidence in daily domestic activities such as shopping, cooking, cleaning. Exchange of language, culture, and traditions with locals in the neighborhood. The experience of living like an Italian, a citizen of Florence. The opportunity to partake in the local culture of walking to explore Florence.

## Challenges to apartment living

Learning how to manage and share a living space with new people. Understanding the different dynamics and opinions of different individuals. Building new relationships outside of your comfort zone.

## Our Standard for Student Apartments

Several housing questions may be answered by consulting our standard for each apartment as outlined below. For further questions, see our FAQ section or contact the Housing Department.

- Apartments are within walking distance to the school facilities (no more than 20 minutes, all are within the historical city center/inside ancient city walls)
- Multiple occupancy room (double to quad) in shared apartment
- Single rooms are limited and subject to additional supplement
- At least one bathroom every 4 students
- Two full sets of linens for the beds, plus a blanket/comforter
- Towels are not included
- Washing machine
- Clothes drying rack
- Iron and ironing board
- Fan for summer months
- Mosquito repellent plug-in (refills are not supplied)
- Fully equipped kitchen: Flatware, dinnerware, glasses, pots and pans
- Toilet paper (only supplied for arrivals, for the remaining time students must resupply on their own)
- The minimum "set" for cleaning: broom, cloths, sponges. The set does not include detergent and cleaning supplies, which are to be purchased by the student).
- Internet access is available at all apartments. The Housing Department is not responsible for connection quality, as it depends on the phone and internet companies that provide local coverage. For on-campus connections at FUA, wifi is always available at no charge during the institution's hours of opening.
- All apartments are NON-SMOKING





# HOMESTAY

## LA FAMIGLIA ITALIANA

In a homestay, students will live with a host family and be immersed in the Italian culture and language. Evenings and dinner meals are shared together. It should be noted that not all host families are a nuclear family with parents and children. Depending on the families, hosts can vary in terms of age and family situation. Students choosing the host family option live with an Italian family within the greater area of Florence and not necessarily in the historic city center. Although the location will be easily connected, most home-stays require a short bus ride to reach the city center and school. Meals will be served at a specific time and students are required to attend dinner, thus punctuality is important as well as notifying the host family in advance when students wish to dine out.

### **Benefits to living with a family**

Returning students often report that the host family experience was one of the best aspects of studying abroad. By living in a home stay, you will:

Interact daily with locals.

Become a member of the family and build lifelong bonds.

Experience firsthand the customs you will learn about in Italian classes. Practice a foreign language with native speakers in their day-to-day lives.

Have meals provided by your host family (breakfast and dinner).

**Challenges:** Despite the many benefits of living with a host family, it can also be challenging, especially if students have lived on their own in college and are used to being independent. Students will be living in someone else's home, and the host may have rules that should be respected. Also, there will be cultural differences but that is the point and beauty of choosing to live with a host family.

**Dietary Concerns:** In Italy certain special diets, such as vegetarian, are not common. Not eating the food the host family prepares, even for dietary reasons, may be considered rude. If, for cultural, religious, or personal reasons, a student does not eat certain types of food, we ask

that he or she contact the study abroad program administrator from the home institution well in advance to ensure that the host family can accommodate them.

**Tip:** The host family will probably share a similar cultural curiosity towards the student and his or her home country. It is important for us to remind heritage background students, even if you share cultural heritage with your host family, to not expect them to be just like you. Remember, being open-minded about every aspect of studying abroad will ensure that you gain the most from your experience.

**What to Expect:** Host families live in either apartments or single-family houses. Students are guaranteed a room shared with another student (although single room options are available, they are very limited). Facilities such as the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room are shared with the rest of the family. The standard of living is comfortable. Breakfast and dinner are provided but not lunch. In-house laundry facilities are usually available (each family has its own rules and regulations for when and how to do laundry), and many homes – though not all – have internet access. Students should expect to be tidy and clean up after themselves, or be asked to help with household tasks.

**Quality Family Time!** The student becomes a real adult member of the family, not just a boarder. Italian host families are liberal and down-to-earth. Students are free to go out with friends during the week or to travel over weekends but the host family must be kept informed. This is considered being responsible and polite. Also, most host families have a curfew. Host families are genuinely interested in introducing students to the Italian culture – they seek to meet your desire to be integrated into Italian culture.

**Diversity of Host Families:** The Housing Office offers a great diversity of host families, including nuclear families, single-parent families, and various other combinations, including families of other nationalities residing in Italy. They may have young children, grown-up children or none at all. They may be young, middle-aged or retired, and some hosts may be single. Students may write their preferences in the registration form and we will do our best to find a compatible family based on availability.



### **A host family is the right option if you:**

Want to immerse yourself into Italian culture and traditions.  
Are willing to spend time getting to know the family and balance this with hanging out with your friends.

Are prepared to do a short commute, as location obviously varies.  
Are happy to tidy after yourself and occasionally help with household tasks.

### **A host family is NOT the right option if you:**

Plan on having an active social life with friends during the week.  
Want to live in the historic city center and walk to your class. Have strict dietary needs including allergies and religious strict diet.  
An alternative option to the host family stay is the Italian Family Club offered by SLD, where you have the opportunity to interact with an Italian family in the historic city center WITHOUT living with them.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Homestays

### **Who are the host families?**

As mentioned above, host families feature diversity; some with young or teenaged children and others with none at all, with ethnic backgrounds varying - though they are Italian citizens or permanent residents. This usually only enriches the cultural exchange between family and student. The Housing Department does its best to find you a compatible family. All host families receive a small subsidy from PALAZZI but they choose to join our program because they value the intercultural exchange that occurs between them and the student, and because they enjoy spending time with you - their new family member. All PALAZZI-approved families have been screened and carefully selected by our staff. Homes/apartments are visited regularly by PALAZZI staff members.

### **Can I choose my host family myself?**

Yes and no. The Housing Department will match you with a compatible family based on the personal profile we receive from you as well as from your registration form, so please be as honest and clear with your descriptions and requests as possible. We receive the same kind of information from our host families and match you accordingly. Our families are as different as the students who join them in terms of lifestyle, interests, routines, age and composition. Therefore please understand that we're not able to accommodate all requests.

### **Will staying with a family limit my freedom?**

The family will treat you as a grown-up and as they are liberal and down-to-earth, they will be your friends and allies. You are of course free to go out with your friends during the week or to travel on weekends. However, the intercultural exchange is the whole point of the family stay, so you should be prepared to spend some weekends and evenings at home with the family as well. Many families have a curfew.

### **How does the food issue work?**

Breakfast and dinner are provided like in any regular family. You are only responsible for lunch. The typical Italian breakfast consists of tea/coffee (or cappuccino) with bread, butter and jam or a simple pastry. Any concerns or requests regarding breakfast should be directed in advance to the Housing Department. Most Italian families eat dinner together and consider this an important time for discussion, laughs and bonding. Dinner is, therefore, a good time for you to spend time with the family. Lunch is on your own and many families do not allow cooking in the

kitchen. Please ask before you decide to use the kitchen on your own and don't be surprised if you are not allowed to.

### **Will I have internet access during my family stay housing?**

The vast majority of Italian households have access to the internet. This goes for our host families, too. However, we do not guarantee access to the internet. If this is crucial to you, then you are welcome to write a note about it on your housing form and we'll take this into consideration when matching you with a host family. When living in a family without internet, please remember that you will always have access to internet facilities at our campuses.

### **How much time will I spend on commuting?**

Expect at least a 15-20 minute commute to campus. This may be a big change from life at your home campus, but commuting is a natural part of European life, and a strong public transportation system is one of the most significant differences between typical European and American cities. Studying with us means living as the Italians live, and getting around the city as they do. Once you get adjusted to your short commute, you will start enjoying the ride and be able to use the peace and quiet on the bus/train for naps, catching up with your homework, or chatting up a conversation with an Italian commuter.

Note: The cost of commuting from your host family to school and within central Florence is NOT included in the program cost.

### **Do Italians speak English well?**

The Italians generally speak English well, though fluency varies.

### **If I don't consume some meals with the family, can I have a refund?**

Families plan weeks in advance for their meals and shop accordingly so no refund will be given for missed meals.

### **If I want to change my housing option once the program has started can I do so?**

Keep in mind that families host students because they are interested in knowing more about a different culture and to help students wanting to know and immerse in the Italian culture. Families prepare well in advance of your arrival to accommodate and make your stay as comfortable, interesting and memorable. Changing your housing option is possible but will be time and energy consuming, not to mention costly. Please be very responsible when deciding to do an Italian host family housing option.















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