

NABA- MILAN, ITALY 2009

Introduction

I enjoyed walking around the Canals on sunny days. All the fairs, expositions, and events happening- there was always something going on.

Preparing to Leave

Make sure you have a place to stay as soon as you arrive, pack as light as possible! I'm coming back with more than double the luggage. Fortunately, I knew someone here, who was able to host me as soon as I arrived until I found a place

Climate

The weather is extremely hot and humid in the summer and so cold in the winter that it snowed.

Packing

Make sure you have summer clothes as well as one warm jacket/coat for the winter otherwise be prepared to buy them there.

Flight Information

I over packed a little and it was hard to carry all of it. Keep in mind that everything you take you will have to carry from the airport to the hotel or place you will staying so make sure you can manage all of it.

Arrival/Rules and Regulations

NABA is a small academy; therefore, there are no student housing/dorms. However they do help the exchange students find housing. They give you numbers of available apartments and you have to make the calls.

Housing

The school helps students find housing, but you must call yourself and make appointments to see apartments. Therefore you should know some Italian. If the student doesn't speak much Italian, the school can give some extra help.

Academics

There are some pros and cons about NABA. First of all it's an academy, so you don't have exams every two weeks like SFSU. Instead they assign projects and other assignments, most of which are due at the end of the year. That doesn't mean wait until the last month to do all otherwise you WILL NOT finish everything.

The program really forces you to be creative and think outside the box. However, the school lacks a substantial amount of organization. They do not accommodate the exchange students very much. Some of the professors do not stop and explain to the exchange students- they go at their pace as if you were a local student. The classes can be a little fast pace. So there could be a problem if you don't speak the language. I've had a

little trouble in the beginning, but then got into the rhythm. Most of all, you have to take the initiative for your learning and do a lot of work on your own. One can learn a lot from NABA, but be prepared for a different experience.

Campus Life

There is no campus life. It's not like SFSU. It is a small academy, so you have to really try to make friends with classmates or other exchange students. For the most part, everyone knows each other or at least by face. There are snack and coffee machines in almost, if not all, every buildings. There is also a dining hall that is open from about 12-3 for lunch. Anytime before or after they only serve coffee and pastries. You can also hang out and study there. There is a computer lab that is open daily from 9am-7pm.

Social Life

You can't be shy and just talk to everyone. There is also something called International Week that is a weekly social at a lounge which all the universities from Milan participate in (it's like Pint Night on a much bigger scale). It's not very personal; however, so you should make friend(s) with exchange students and go in a group.

Religion

The young people are very progressive and not very religious.

Leisure

There are always expositions and events happening in the city. The Navigli (Canals) are a nice area to hang out. There a lot of bars and restaurants. Lots of young people hang out in Porta Ticinese. Brera is beautiful area that is full of boutiques and shops.

Shopping

The shopping is great! Of course there are the big brands, such as Zara, H&M, etc but there are some of their own brands. They also have a lot of boutiques and small stores which I really enjoyed shopping at.

Travel

Must see places in Italy are the Cinque Terre, the northern lakes (Como, Maggiore, and others). The best times to go are obviously during the spring and summer. Florence, Bologna, Torino, Verona, and just about very city in Italy is absolutely beautiful.

Closing

I would suggest you should just soak up the experience as much as possible. Enjoy everyday to its fullest. Remember that it's a once a life time experience, so you have no time to let small things get to you. You will have your ups and downs, but that's normal and at the end you will learn from it. Travel as much as you can and learn as much as you can about the culture. You can prepare as much as possible in many ways, but there are some things you just cannot and you will understand when you get here.