HOMESTAY – LA FAMIGLIA ITALIANA

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 first-hand 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 well in advance the study abroad program administrator from the home institution 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 is 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 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 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.