



Full name: Stas Shaposhnik

Email: stasshaposhnik@gmail.com

Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi

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Exchange Experience

The first thing to know about the Bocconi experience is that as an MBA student in TAU you will be joining the “normal” Masters courses and you won’t be part of the SDA Bocconi which is a separated school of business. In other words, as an MBA exchange student from TAU you will probably be studying with students of average age of 23, for the better and for the worse. Notice that after your arrival to Milano you will receive an Email from SDA Bocconi with an offer to join the MBA program courses, but the fact that this is a very rigid offer that includes a compulsory of 6 courses, of them many courses you’ve already completed in TAU, makes this offer irrelevant.

Visa:

For studying in Italy, you will have to start the bureaucratic procedure in Israel, going to the Italian consulate in order to issue a student visa (don’t forget to bring everything that’s mentioned in the consulate’s check list!). The bureaucratic procedure continues in the first days you are in Italy. You will have to fill the application for the “permit of stay” (designated sessions will be held at the university and there is a very clear explanation at the university’s website). Long story short, after filling the forms and buying a special 20 Euro stamp, you will have to go to the local post office in Milano, paying about 100 Euros. You will get an appointment for the local police station in order to take your fingerprints (in my case, the appointment set was after my departure back to Israel, so it was saved from me).

The City:

Milano is the financial heart of Italy and Bocconi is the biggest producer of financiers for this industry. Milano itself is not a classical European city. Although the center of the city is beautiful with the Duomo di Milano- the third largest cathedral in the world and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II- the oldest shopping mall in Europe, most of the city is quite grey. Some other must-see sights include: Castello Sforzesco, a huge castle built by one of the most powerful families in Milan, where the last statue of Michelangelo resides; Leonardo Da Vinci's famous "Last Supper" (be advised that you should make a reservation to see the art piece long time before the visit); The famous Opera house- Alla Scala; the charming neighborhood of Brera and more. The recommended neighborhoods for Bocconi students include Navigli, Ticinese and Porta Romana. Milano is a very lively city, even more than Tel Aviv. Always something is happening, whether the Design Week or the Gelato Festival or the Fashion week or the Food Truck festival and many more. Just walk at night near the Navigli Grande canal and you will see thousands of young people, every day of the week just hanging out and having fun.

The University:

The University of Bocconi is the second most expensive school in Italy, which draws students from many wealthy Italian families. The difference of the external look between the Italian students and the exchange students is very visible. The Italians, both the professors and the students wear elegant attire, very different from what we are used to in Israel. Especially in presentations, be advised to wear a jacket and elegant pants (learn from my mistake, being the only student wearing jeans and a polo shirt at a final presentation).

The University is well respected in whole Italy and has very strong connections to the Italian industry. Saying that you study in Bocconi University in Italy, will draw reactions of admiration and impression. Many Bocconi graduates hold key positions in Italian and European firms and many of the alumni are still in touch with the school and come for guest lectures or serve as regular non-academic professors.

The Courses:

I took 3 courses- Private Equity and Venture Capital: one of the most popular courses in Bocconi. 400 students fully booked the course in 5 minutes with a long list of frustrated students who didn't make it. The course had 1 academic professor and a non-academic professor, who is Fabio Sattin, the owner of the largest Private Equity firm in Italy. The course included in addition to the exams- a group presentation on the Fintech topic. Highly recommended course.

The second course was Investment Banking which also had 2 professors- Massimo Gatti, who was voted as the best Professor in Bocconi 15 years in a row (for a good reason) and Massimo Delle Ragione, the CEO of Goldman Sachs Italy (!!). Both courses were highly interesting and included fascinating stories and cases from the non-academic professors and many guest lectures from key people in the industries.

The last course was IT Consulting, a less recommended one. The course included a big group presentation, sponsored by HPE and a final exam. The course was comprised mainly of guest lectures from the IT sector and trips to the ENI datacenter (the most powerful private computer in the world) and to the headquarters of HPE Italy. You won't learn many new things with this course.

All 3 courses were taken attending, meaning I had to attend at least 75% of classes. 3 attending courses means a lot of time spent for studying and preparing group presentations and less time for traveling. If you plan more traveling, consider taking some courses as non-attending (although the final exam will be more difficult for the non-attending). The Bocconi grade system has a maximum score of 30 points and a passing grade is 18. Getting 27/30 in Bocconi is much easier than getting 90/100 in TAU and the average of the Italian students is usually 27+. As an attending students, in most courses you will be able to choose between taking one final exam comprises the material of the whole course or taking 2 mid term exams, splitting the material into 2. Note than even if failing in the first mid-term, you will still be able to take the final exam and your first mid term grade won't be counted.

Housing:

This is maybe the trickiest part in this journey. Finding an apartment for 1 person is very hard for a period less than 1 year. The common options for Bocconi students are finding a room in a shared apartment or residing in Bocconi dorms. The dorms option is less recommended as there is a curfew after midnight, you are not allowed to have people over night, some of the dorms are in remoted areas, their kitchens don't have an oven and their prices are not significantly cheaper than the other options. For finding an apartment, I recommend to used Facebook groups like "Bocconi Rents". Other options include local realtors, AirBnb, Spotahome and Uniplaces. The prices range from 500 Euros a month for an apartment in a remote area with many flat mates to 1100 Euros for a 1 bedroom apartment with no flat mated in a good area.

Transportation:

Milano has a very efficient public transport system, which includes buses, trams and metro. A monthly pass costs 35 Euros and includes all the transportation means inside Milano. If you are under 26, the monthly pass will cost only 25 Euros. You will have to go to a local ATM point (not the cash machine!) which is located at the Duomo metro station with 2 passport photos in order to issue the card. The process may take a while since the queue at the ATM point is usually long.

Food:

Generally speaking, the food in Milano is cheaper than the food in Israel. The University has a canteen open 6 days a week, during lunch and dinner hours. The meal is subsidized by Bocconi and costs only 4.1 Euros. The meal includes a main course, second course, a side dish and a soft drink. The quality and the selection are excellent and the value/price is super high. A typical dinner in Milano is the Aperetivo. Although meant to be a "pre dinner" snack, most of the Milanese restaurants offer between 18:00-22:00 an alcoholic drink accompanied with "eat as much as you can" buffet. The price is very cheap compared to Israeli standards and ranges between 8-12 Euros. Some recommended places for Aperetivo are Leonardo Da Vinci, Maya

and Sacresia in Navigli Area; Farini near Colonne di San Lorenzo, Fonderie Milanese not far from Bocconi (you should reserve a table for the last one) and Madeira in Porta Romana area. You won't find many students going to "real" restaurants because the cheaper choice for young students is more suitable. Additional must visit food establishments in Milano are Luini Panzerotti and Spontini Pizza (typical very thick Milanese Pizza)- both are near the Duomo. More recommended restaurants are Osteria Conchetta near Navigli with great Milanese food, Piz Pizza and Sorbillo for thin Neapolitan Pizzas and Obica at the rooftop of the Rinacente shopping center for a great Mozzarella and a great view. For a higher-end place you can reserve a table at Carlo e Camila, whose chef is a judge in Italian prime time food realities. Great Gelatos in the city include Amorino in Brera Neighborhood, Casa Infante in via Torino and GROM (all over town).

Drinks and Parties:

For the beer lovers, there are a few local micro-breweries in Milano, including the recommended 7 Luppoli and Birrificio Lambrate. For the whiskey lovers, you can try Muligans with a great selection of Scotch. Party wise, famous places in Milano include Old Fashion, Just Cavalli and Le Banque. For more alternative choices, you will find Cox18 in Navigli with local Punk and Metal bands and super cheap beer. In addition, very recommended options include sitting in the Colonne di San Lorenzo area or near the canals of Navigli and buying a cheap beer in one of the nearest kiosks and joining the many other young people doing the same. In the 2 latter options, the atmosphere is very different from the Bocconi "serious financial atmosphere" and much more lighter and hipsterish.

Shopping:

For high-end designer cloths, you should visit Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II or the Rinacente shopping mall near the Duomo or Via Montenapoleone street. For more common brands like Zara, H&M you can visit the Corso Emanuele II street, Corso Venezia and Corso Buenos Aires (by this order, one street blends into the other). For men's fashion, recommended affordable local brands include Boggi Milano, Gutteridge and Del Mare 1911. A recommended

supermarket is Esselunga at Via Ripamonti- a huge supermarket with a great selection of everything.

In summary, Milano is the financial heart of Europe and the Bocconi students are well aware of the fact that they are going to be the next financial and business leaders of this country and they act accordingly from a very young age. Most of your closest friends won't be Italian but international as you are. This is a great opportunity to meet students and to make friends from all over the world and to study in a European top10 institution, finance and economics wise. On the way you will enjoy great and cheap food, and you will have the opportunity to travel cheaply to other European destinations (Ryanair/Easyjet flights from Milan are as low as 30 Euros to cities like London, Stockholm and many more). Italy itself is beautiful as well and don't miss the opportunity to travel to other Northern cities like Como, Venice, Sirimione, Bologna, Parma and also Florence, Cinque Terre, Pisa and more.

For any questions, feel free to reach me at:

stasshaposchnik@gmail.com

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