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In my experience, the exchange students program was meaningful. I have been exposed to different cultures and points of view which opened my mind to whole new world. In addition, it was an opportunity to take a pause from my hectic routine and rethink my future plans. And finally, it always fun to travel! 😊

Visa

Student visa is required unless you are an EU citizen.

The process starts in Israel. First, you should make an appointment with the Italian embassy in Tel Aviv.

When you go to the embassy, make sure that you have these documents with you: an acceptance letter from the hosting university, a flight ticket, address of accommodation, financial resources, health insurance and your passport. Getting a visa takes about 10 days and it's cost about NIS 220.

The process then continues in Italy. During the first week at Bocconi, you will get all the information you need about the "permission to stay". This process includes filling out a form, going to the post office (where you pay around €35) and another appointment at police immigration office (usually few months later).

The city

Milan is the second largest city in Italy, and well known for hosting many Italian and international businesses. Milan is also one of the leading fashion and design centers in the world.

When I arrived Milan, I imagined that I would see models on the streets, but obviously this it's not the reality. However, even if you are not a fashion lover, there is an amazing atmosphere in the city during 'Milan design week' and 'Milan fashion week'. I were there during the fashion week and I strongly recommend going to the places where fashion shows take place and watch the photographers in action, the models and the amazing fashion bloggers.

Nightlife in Milan

Milan doesn't have one major nightlife center, but I usually went to Navigli area, which it's not far from the university. In Navigli near the canal, there are many restaurants and cool bars including those that offer an Aperitivo- an Italian 'all you can eat' buffet.

If you want to dance, there are some clubs with free entrance for students, where you pay €10 for 2 drinks (such as, Cavali and Old Fashion).

Bocconi

The university is considered as one of the best in Italy, offering a wide range of courses in English in different areas such as marketing, entrepreneurship, big data, accounting and more. The university host about 800 foreign students each year (approximately 10% are graduate students). the program is flexible; which means, you can take different courses with different students (both Italians and foreign).

The university offers an option to take courses with SDA Bocconi, Bocconi MBA program. In addition, once a year, the SDA Bocconi entrepreneurship club organizes a Hackathon, called 'Imagine Bocconi'- 4-days of intensive, hard work where teams solve business problem that given by the sponsor. The process includes ideation, defining target market and pitching ideas. I think it's a great learning experience and I strongly recommend taking part in this challenge.

I will also recommend, checking Bocconi emails in regular basis, since there are many inspiring lectures that are organized by the university and the students clubs. I have been to a few of them, for example, 'a coffee with Howard Schultz' Starbucks CEO, and in a women panel, 'winning women leading the way' with inspiring CEOs that work in Italy, USA and other European countries.

Housing

Milan's housing market is very tough, so I recommend looking for an apartment in advance (at least 2 months). It took me more than a month to find an apartment and I spent a lot of money on Airbnb and hotels.

There are different ways to find an apartment: Israeli Facebook groups (In general, be aware of scams on Facebook), contact Airbnb landlords for long term renting or using the university's recommendation list.

My apartment cost €600 per month.

Transportation

In Milan

The public transportation in Milan is very good and includes the Metro, Tram and buses. You can buy a monthly travel card (I bought 4-month travel card) or buy regular tickets in the Tabacchi shops or through the ATM's app.

! Pay attention- there are areas outside Milan where you can't travel with a regular ticket (you should buy an Extra-Urban ticket).

Outside Milan

One of the best things about this experience is the opportunity to travel! And in Italy it's quite simple, there are trains that run through the cities and also cheap flights.

Just remember, when you buy a ticket in advance, you pay less.

Tips

- Enjoy the Aperitivo tradition- Milan offers the best experience
- Take SDA Bocconi courses
- Take part in the 'Imagine Bocconi' Hackathon
- Participate in ESN activities- sometimes they offer nice travels
- Travel as much as you can- Italy is amazing!
- Flights across Europe are very cheap (depending on when you order the tickets)
- Don't miss the fashion week experience
- Venice during the Carnival is amazing
- Every region in Italy has his own typical food, wine and dessert- try it while you're there
- Eat in 'all you can eat' sushi places (there are many in Milan)
- Have a traditional Italian meal at least once during the visit
- If you want to see models, the Cavalli club is the place for you 😊
- Don't miss lunch time (lunch is served until 14:30; after that, it's really hard to find a place to eat)
- Don't wait until the last minute to look for an apartment
- Enjoy your time there, because one semester goes by very fast!

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