



ITALY

FIELD GUIDE

A vertical photograph of a forest scene featuring a small waterfall cascading over mossy rocks. The water is blurred, creating a sense of motion. The surrounding forest has tall, thin trees and a ground covered in fallen leaves and moss.

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LIFE IN THE FIELD





The Center



Academic Foci

- The center is located in the heart of Tuscany surrounded by lagoons, vineyards, olive groves, and mountainous backdrops.
- Stretching through three biogeographic regions (Alpine, Continental, and Mediterranean), Italy is a biodiversity hotspot hosting the highest number and density of animal and plant species in the European Union.
- Due to the diversity of climates, topographies, and geology, Italy has an array of agricultural systems and gastronomic specialties making it the perfect location to study agricultural practices, rural development, and food system policies.

SEMESTER:

SUSTAINING TRADITIONS: FOOD, FARMING, AND CLIMATE

Intersection of food production, biodiversity conservation, environmental policy, and climate change. Food systems policy objectives and implementation. Sustainable management of food systems. Agroecological practices,

Each program combines theory learned in the classroom alongside field-based applications. Time in the classroom is structured to give students a solid understanding of environmental history, theory, and conservation techniques before deploying their knowledge or specific techniques in the field. All classes are taught in English.



Setting and Facilities

Student apartments in the ancient city of Greve.

RURAL



URBAN

GREVE IN CHIANTI

2-minute walk

Population ~14,000

Medieval-era buildings, restaurants, shops, farmers markets, doctors and ATMs.

FLORENCE

45-minute drive or 1.5 hours by bus.

Population ~382,000

Capital of Tuscany region. Same amenities as Greve on a larger scale. Rich bar scene and focus on arts and history.

HOUSING

Two apartments housing up to 8 students each. Two rooms per apartment, with up to 4 people per room in twin beds or bunk beds. Each apartment has a shared kitchen and living room.

Shared bathrooms with shower (hot water) and western-style toilet.

OTHER FACILITIES

Classrooms and staff offices are a 5-15 minute walk from apartments. Additional student lounge with couches, kitchen, dart board, and ping-pong table.

Laundry mats are available in town for approximately \$1.50 USD per 2 lbs.



Community Interaction

Students live in a local apartment with other SFS students rather than a homestay or university dorm. This means they will not navigate the local culture, cuisine, or language every day. However, meaningful research is only possible with the input of local people, so community engagement and Directed Research projects vary each term to reflect the requests of our partners. Some examples of past outreach initiatives include planting trees, working in community gardens, picking up trash, and outreach at schools.



Chores

Students are expected to take responsibility for their space. Students will cook and clean their apartment as a group. Specific chore responsibilities will be shared during orientation.



Campus Policies

Because center locations are often unfamiliar to students, there are campus policies in place to keep students safe including nightly curfew, sign-out logs, and a buddy system. Note that during program time students are obligated to stay at the center, and no non-SFS guests are allowed on campus. If your family or friends are planning on visiting you, please have them do so during program breaks or coordinate with the center director for approval before booking flights. Time off during program time to spend with guests is limited. More specific campus policies will be shared during orientation.



Time-off

Students will have highly structured schedules on weekdays, with weekends generally free. Attendance is required for all activities including multi-day trips that may fall on the weekends. Students will also have a mid-semester break. Travel to certain regions or neighboring countries during time off may be prohibited based on risk levels or center policies.

Students are responsible for their food costs during program breaks but can stay at the center. See page 12 for estimated costs.



Alcohol & Substances

Consumption or possession of alcohol is limited on campus. Students who consume alcohol during non-program time, need to do so in moderation and maintain respectful behavior toward others.

SFS does not allow possession or use of any medications or substances that are illegal in the U.S. or host country for the full duration of SFS programs including free time and weekends away. Check local laws before possessing, purchasing, or using e-cigarettes or vaping devices on program.



Food

SFS will provide the group daily lunch and occasional dinners. For the remaining meals, students will have a stipend to purchase their own meals and cook together.

SFS can support most dietary needs, but the variety of food will be extremely limited due to local availability and cost. SFS cannot accommodate life-threatening gluten allergies or strict Halal or Kosher diets. Meals are simple and repeat every week, so SFS always recommends bringing vitamins, protein bars, nuts, favorite snacks, etc.

Meals may consist of meat, fish, eggs, pasta, vegetables, and fruit. Cheese, pasta, and bread are common ingredients. Snacks may include tea, coffee, granola bars, yogurt, fruit, and toast with jam.



Exercise

There are yoga mats, basic weights, and jumping ropes. In town, there are running and cycling routes. Additionally, there are paid exercise classes, gym, and swimming pool.



Considerations

Language: Italian is the official language. Locals have little to intermediate knowledge of English. Students without basic Italian may find interactions with locals limited. Most of your time will be spent with your cohort, so do not expect to practice the local language daily.

Diversity: 92% identify as Italian, 1% Asian, 1% African, and the remaining 6% is comprised of other European immigrants and racial minorities. 83% of the population is Christian and 12% have no religion.

Culture: Gendered language and affectionate greetings (kisses on cheeks).

Physical Rigor: Students will need to hike for up to 3 hours at a time.

Hazards: Livestock, heat, insects, and pickpockets.

Travel: Students will travel frequently between rural and urban environments.



Climate

December-February are the coldest months, with an average temperature of about 45°F. March-May and September-November bring mild weather with average temperatures from 50-70°F. June to August average temperatures soar to between 75-90°F. Summers will be hot with lots of mosquitos.



Money

The local currency is the Euro (EUR).

Both cash and debit/credit cards are widely accepted. All students are required to bring a credit/debit card with at least \$3,000 in funds in case of emergencies. Mastercard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards internationally. Notify banks about international travel.

Euros can be ordered from banks prior to travel, exchanged for USD, or withdrawn from ATMs. When bringing USD to exchange, travel with bills in excellent condition (clean, unwrinkled, unmarked, with no tears). Students will have access to ATMs in Greve. Students can also order Euros from their bank prior to program. (See page 12)



Electricity

The electrical voltage in Italy is 230 (the U.S. uses 120). Check all electrical devices to see if a voltage converter is needed. Italy uses plug type F, C, and L (the U.S. uses A and B). All students should bring plug adaptors.



Internet

Wireless internet is available at the center, but it is slow and sometimes unavailable. SFS reserves the right to limit internet activities occurring on our servers including, but not limited to, streaming or downloading audio/video content (Facetime, Netflix, etc.).



Computers

Students need to bring laptops with Microsoft Office (or the ability to open Microsoft files offline) and a USB port. Electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than normal. In particular, Apple products are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect devices.



Phones

Students with unlocked phones can purchase local SIM cards for about \$10 USD per GB. Most students choose to rely solely on WIFI.



Mail

The average one-way travel time for mail from the U.S. to Italy is 2-3 business days for express service and 10-15 business days for standard service. Therefore, no mail can be sent standard service during the three weeks of programs, as students will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.

Address: Student Name, The School for Field Studies, Hub Counter
Galli Silvano, Fermata Autobus, Piazza Terramadre,
Greve in Chianti Firenze, 50022, Italy



Sample Schedule

This is just a sample; no one week will follow this outline exactly. Students will receive program schedules after their arrival. Schedules are always subject to change based on weather, event availability, and other factors outside of SFS’ control, including the day of, so students should arrive with a flexible mindset. All events apart from Free Time are mandatory.

Students should expect long days in the classroom at the start of the program transitioning into fieldwork and independent study.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div>Free time in Town (Laundry, Homework, Relaxation).</div> <div>During days off students are responsible for all meals. See Page 12 for budgeted costs.</div>	Breakfast (Students prepare)	Breakfast (Students prepare)	Breakfast (Students prepare)	Breakfast (Students prepare)	Breakfast (Students prepare)	<div>Free time in Town (Laundry, Homework, Relaxation).</div> <div>During days off students are responsible for all meals. See Page 12 for budgeted costs.</div>
	9-11am Agr-Env Policy & Socio-economic Values - Discussion	9-11am Italian Language & Culture - Lecture	9-11am Food Systems Ecology - Project Prep	9-11am Food Systems Resource Management - Lecture	9am-1:30pm Field Trip	
	11:30am-1:30pm Food Systems Resource Management - Documentary	11:30am-1:30pm Agr-Env Policy & Socio-Economic Values - Lecture	11:30am-1:30pm Food Systems Ecology - Project Presentations	11:30am-1:30pm Agr-Env Policy & Socio-Economic Values - Debate	Field trips can be any day of the week and occasionally last multiple days.	
	1:30-2:30pm Lunch (SFS Prepares)	1:30-2:30pm Lunch (SFS Prepares)	1:30-2:30pm Lunch (SFS Prepares)	1:30-2:30pm Lunch (SFS Prepares)	1:30-2:30pm Lunch (SFS Prepares)	
	2:30pm-Dinner Free Time at the Center/Town	Community Engagement and Dinner	2:30pm-Dinner Free Time at the Center/Town	2:30pm-Dinner Free Time at the Center/Town	2:30pm-Dinner Free Time at the Center/Town	
	Dinner (Students prepare)		Dinner (Students prepare)	Dinner (Students prepare)	Dinner (Students prepare)	
No Curfew	No Curfew	No Curfew	No Curfew	No Curfew	No Curfew	No Curfew

- Meals and Announcements
- Free Time
- Community Engagement
- Classroom Time
- Field Work
- Curfew



Health & Safety in the Field



24-Hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline. To urgently contact a student in the field, call 978.219.5113.



Health & Wellness Manager

The Student Health & Wellness Manager is a full-time primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus. They are certified in Wilderness First Response, or an equivalent certification, and trained in sexual assault first response. They also counsel students on life abroad, conduct risk assessments, attend medical appointments, and help coordinate program logistics.



Orientation

Prior to departure, SFS requires attendance at a pre-departure orientation focused on essential aspects of the program. Students must also research the inherent risks associated with traveling abroad and cultural considerations themselves. Upon arrival to campus, students receive an additional orientation about the local community and culture, center operations, and relevant risks.



Medical Care

SFS maintains detailed risk assessment and management plans. If a medical care facility visit is needed, staff will accompany the student to the appointment. There may be times when medical care is delayed. Students are responsible for all medical costs and all incidental expenses incurred by all parties involved including transportation, accommodations, etc. This may include costs related to COVID-19 quarantining. Some medical conditions may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program. Final decisions on medical withdrawals are made by SFS. See the Health and Safety Guide for more information.



Mental Health Support

Adjusting to new environments while away from usual support systems is challenging. While abroad, there is decreased communication with home, limited privacy, and fewer opportunities for exercise. Many students find the rigorous schedule of SFS programs and the rare opportunities for alone time overwhelming.

SFS is partnered with Telus Health ([My SSP website](#)) to provide students with access to free, mental health and wellness support via WIFI. My SSP is a supplemental resource, and students should work with their mental health provider to create a primary support plan while abroad. See the Health and Safety Guide for more information.



Identity

Each country is shaped by its history, and therefore attitudes towards gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion can differ greatly. What seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity. Students should research how their identity might be perceived in a new context.

Studying abroad is a privilege, and it is not our students' place to change the host country's culture or values. SFS campuses are permanent fixtures and home to staff year-round. As representatives of SFS and students' own countries, behavior that is disrespectful, illegal, or contrary to cultural norms can degrade the relationship with the community.



Sexual Health & Wellness

Please consider:

- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on a small residential campus or within the local community.
- Access to protection, medication for sexually transmitted infections, and emergency contraception may not be available.
- The current dialogue and understanding of consent in the U.S. does not always apply in other cultures.
- If anyone feels subjected to sexual harassment, they should walk away from the situation without concern for being culturally inappropriate. They can report harassment or assault to any staff member.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS provides support to student including access to medical care and support systems and the option to report to law enforcement. However, local laws and limited availability of resources such as rape kits can complicate reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault in foreign countries.



LGBTQIA+

SFS welcomes all students at our centers, but recommends students know the following:

- Laws and social customs of the host country may criminalize same-sex relationships or certain gender expressions.
- Travelers may experience discrimination and harassment.
- Some cultural practices are based on traditional gender roles. As a result, some students might be misgendered.
- Some languages are gendered, resulting in a lack of terms that encompass non-binary and gender-neutral identities.
- Health services specific to transgender people may be limited or unavailable.
- It is not always possible to use preferred names or genders (visa paperwork, plane tickets, hotel reservations, and government sites). Gender X is not recognized worldwide, and students may need to provide binary sex information. See the LGBTQ+ Resource Guide for more information.



PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE



Program Costs

The relationship SFS has with students' schools will determine the billing process. Within a week of acceptance, students or their schools will be required to pay a non-refundable deposit to reserve their spot. Afterward, we will reach out to students or their schools to collect tuition payments. Up-to-date costs and refund policies can be found [here](#).

Included in SFS program costs are program advising and orientations, tuition and research fees, airport transfers, housing and meals during program time, field excursions and cultural activities, official transcript processing, and evacuation and 24/7 support in case of emergencies.

PROGRAM	BILLING DEADLINE
Spring	November 1st
Summer 1 or 1+2	April 1st
Summer 2	May 1st
Fall	June 1st

BASIC COSTS (BILLED BY SFS)

SEMESTER

Tuition	\$19,050
Room & Board	\$5,500
BASIC PROGRAM COST	\$24,550

ADDITIONAL COSTS (ESTIMATED, ACTUAL COSTS MAY VARY)

Airfare	\$1,500
Passport	\$200
Visa fees (if applicable)	\$150
Immunizations/Medications	\$200
Personal Expenses	\$1,000
Program Breaks	\$1,500
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$4,550

TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS (BASIC + ADDITIONAL COSTS)

ESTIMATED TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$29,100
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Financial Aid

All students are encouraged to apply for SFS financial aid. Financial aid applications are reviewed on a rolling basis starting in February for summer programs, April for fall programs, and September for spring programs. Early submissions are welcomed. Students who submit an SFS financial aid application by the payment deadline will be considered for our full range of aid options. Learn more [here](#).



TRAVEL



PASSPORT

Students must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least 3 months after departure.



VISA

U.S. citizens attending a program will enter Italy using a Long-stay Visa - Type D. Students need to contact their local consulates for appointment times, application requirements, and visa fees as soon as they are accepted. SFS will provide supporting documentation for the visa, however, students are responsible for applying for and obtaining the visas themselves. Upon arrival, SFS staff will assist students in procuring the additional Residence Permit (Permesso di Soggiorno) required by Italian law. Student Visa costs are the student's responsibility and are approximately \$150 USD, prices are subject to change. Residence Permit costs are included in tuition.

U.S. citizens traveling before and/or after the program within Italy or other Schengen countries will be allotted an additional 90-day tourist visa waiver.

Non-U.S. citizens may require a different visa process and are responsible for applying for, obtaining, and paying for their own visa(s) valid for the duration of their stay.



FLIGHTS

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from their program. Students will receive travel instructions at least 2 months prior to the start of their program. Do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and time specified in the airport instructions and transport them to the center. Students will receive airport instructions 1-2 weeks prior to the start of their program. If students are traveling before or after the program, they are responsible for meeting the group at the airport at the designated date and time. Additionally, SFS is not responsible for transporting or storing luggage before or after the program.

SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs canceled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power, or communications.





Medical Requirements



Medical Approval Process

Students are required to complete the SFS medical approval process. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. No student may enter the field until medical approval is granted by SFS. See Medical Review Guide for more information.



Vaccinations & Medications

Required

- None

Recommended

- Centers for Disease Control, travel clinics, or medical providers can provide further recommendations.



Internal Health Insurance

Students are required to buy international health insurance. Students will receive international health insurance requirements upon acceptance to their program. Keep in mind most companies reimburse medical costs, so students need an emergency credit card/debit card with at least \$3,000 USD to pay for medical expenses upfront.

All students are enrolled in an emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG) for the duration of their program only. This is supplemental insurance to students' own comprehensive health insurance outlined above. See Medical Review Guide for more information.



Accommodating Disabilities

SFS works with students, schools, and physicians to determine required accommodations and whether they can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. We strive to meet students' needs, but due to the remote nature of programs, there are varying levels of accessibility. Questions regarding health or learning accommodations can be directed to the Office of Student Affairs or the Office of Academic Affairs respectively.



PACKING GUIDE



Packing Considerations



Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much or what type of luggage students bring, however, you will be sharing a room and you will have limited space to store your belongings. Staff would like students to bring at least one soft-sided suitcase as it makes it easier to pack for field trips. Bring only what can be maneuvered oneself and check with all airlines for luggage restrictions and fees. Students should be aware they are limited to 10kg carry-on (55 x 40 x 20cm) for their Sicily field trip.



Culture & Climate

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Do not bring anything that cannot be damaged!

While packing, consider the impact of the products brought to the program, both the ingredients and packaging. Plastic can be difficult for waste management in remote environments. Think about bringing a reusable tote, metal straw, cloth napkins, etc. We also highly encourage biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and conditioners.



Required Packing

- **Pants** Lightweight blends that dry quickly. 1+ for field work and 2+ normal pants for day-to-day.
- **Shorts** Runners may want a few pairs of athletic shorts.
- **T-shirts and Tank tops**
- **Long-sleeved shirts** 2+ for field work. A mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton.
- **Casual/nice clothes** for town. Nothing that cannot be ruined.
- **Lightweight jacket and warm layers**
- **Waterproof jacket with a hood or Poncho** Water resistant is not sufficient.
- **Underwear and Socks** including light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks.
- **Pajamas** appropriate for shared spaces.
- **Sun hat and sunglasses** Hat should have brim.
- **Swimsuit**
- **Sneakers** or other casual shoes.
- **Sandals** with heel straps.
- **Flip flops** for showering.
- Sheets, a pillow, and towels will be provided at the center.
- **Toiletries** Basic items can be purchased in town but bring enough for at least a week. Preferably biodegradable.

- **COVID-19 Home Test Kits and KN95 Masks** for personal use. 2-3 tests and 5 masks recommended. Local availability may be limited.
- **Record of immunizations and Health history**
- **Personal first-aid kit** Consider Anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, Tape, Tweezers, Nail clippers, Antihistamines, Pro-biotics, Antidiarrheals, Vitamin C, Cold medicines, Immune boosters, Hydration salts/Liquid IV, etc.
- **Prescriptions** Overseas prescriptions are not always accepted. Bring adequate supplies of prescription medications to last the duration of the program alongside doctors' prescriptions to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
- **Motion sickness medication/ Dramamine/ Ginger chews**
- **Period care** Students can purchase basic period care in town. We encourage menstrual cups or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.
- **Flash drives and/or External hard drive** At least 1 GB recommended.
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents offline and has a USB port.
- **Surge protector and Plug adaptors**
- **Dry bag or Waterproof daypack cover** Students can also consider several smaller dry bags or sturdy plastic bags. Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well.
- **Day pack** Suitable for taking gear into the field. 15-30L recommended.
- **Weekend bag** to bring on overnight field excursions or weekends off. 35-55L recommended. Soft-sided.
- **Notebooks and Pencils** Can buy locally.
- **Water bottles** 2 bottles with at least 1L capacity each.
- **Sunscreen** 1+ bottles. Can buy locally.
- **Insect Repellent** 1+ bottles. Can buy locally.





Optional Packing

- **University ID card**
- **Purse/tote bag** for town. With zipper to avoid pick-pockets.
- **Swimsuit** 1-2 sets. Highly recommended for trips to the beach.
- **Hiking boots** if you do not want your sneakers getting muddy. Over-the-ankle recommended.
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Handheld fan** for the heat and bugs
- **Umbrella** can buy locally
- **Pocketknife** Checked luggage only.
- **Flashlight**
- **Journal**
- **Games, Movies, and Books**

- **Earplugs and Eye mask**
- **Baby wipes and Hand sanitizer** Can purchase in town.
- **Snacks, Drink powders, and Dietary supplements** Any favorites.
- **Camera**
- **Voltage converter** if needed for electronics.
- **Wristwatch**
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker**
- **Waterproof cases for electronics and silicone packets** (or some water-absorbing equivalent).
- **Binoculars** Preferably 8 x 40 but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine.
- **Extra batteries and External battery packs**



Contact Us

Keep up with SFS follow us on Instagram [@theSFS](#), read [news from the field](#), and find the [full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)

Questions about billing? Billing@fieldstudies.org

Deposit payments, invoices, billing deadlines, financial aid packages, and loan paperwork.

Questions about health and safety? StudentLife@fieldstudies.org

Medical paperwork, immunizations, managing medical conditions, and dietary needs and preferences.

Questions about academics? Academics@fieldstudies.org

Learning accommodations, syllabi, and directed research.

Questions about admissions or enrollment? Admissions@fieldstudies.org

Which program is the best fit, application materials, and travel and visa logistics.